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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE "DOPPELBEGABUNG" OF HECTOR BERLIOZ: MUSIC AND LITERATURE

by

C CLAIRE VUKADINOVIĆ

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE "DOPPELBEGABUNG" OF HECTOR BERLIOZ: MUSIC AND LITERATURE submitted by CLAIRE VUKADINOVIĆ in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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External Examiner

Date April 23, 1986

to my family for their
love and support

ABSTRACT

One feature of the French Romantic movement was the close relationship among various artists such as writers, painters and musicians. The cross-fertilization of inspiration and ideas that took place encouraged a lessening of interart distinctions and an attempt by some artists to express themselves in more than one artistic medium. Thus, the phenomenon of "Doppelbegabung" flourished during the early nineteenth century probably as never before or since. Hector Berlioz (1803-1868) was such an artist: he was to become the most outstanding composer of French Romantic music, but during his lifetime was forced to take up the writing of musical criticism as a means of support. The stage for a fused art form of literature and music was set by Berlioz with his work of 1830, Symphonie fantastique, for which he composed a highly autobiographical programme to accompany the music; this work is discussed here in order to establish principles of Romantic music and its interest in the symbiotic union of literature and music.

Berlioz's integration of text and musical sounds reached its full flowering in the realm of opera, inherent goal of all French Romantic composers. This study investigates the three operatic works for which Berlioz composed both libretto and score. Each chapter presents a musico-literary analysis of an operatic number or scene, chosen as most significant for exposing the true nature of

Berlioz's union of words and music. Passages of libretto text are compared to the literary work from which they were derived as well as to the music involved.

La Damnation de Faust (1845-1846) bears the individual heading "légende dramatique," and is really a "concert opera" rather than one suited for dramatic staging. Such a Romantic form as the "durchkomponiert" song as well as the innovativeness of Berlioz's orchestration resulted in a powerful musical translation of the intense and fantastic images mostly abstracted from Goethe's Faust.

Ten years later Berlioz undertook the full task of libretto and score for his "grand opéra," Les Troyens (1856-1858), based upon Virgil's Aeneid. His composition of the libretto was strongly influenced by his admiration for Shakespearian form. His "système shakespearien" dictated certain structural principles which gave this opera a dramatic continuity and a complexity to the storyline being depicted. He conveyed dramatic irony by simultaneously presenting two contrastive styles of singing illustrated in a duet of Cassandre and Chorèbe, soloists in part one of the opera which takes place in Troy. In part two, set in Carthage, this foreshadowing is continued through the role of supernatural beings such as the ghost of Hector who appears to Énée. The operatic effectiveness of a scene of pantomime such as is found in act three, where the Royal Hunt and Storm is staged, offers full exposure to the orchestral powers of Berlioz and delivers the total story in

miniature as in a play-within-a-play. Following Gluckian principles, Berlioz tried to avoid too obvious a break between recitative and air, but also employed the Shakespearian notion of juxtaposing scenes of contrasting mood and tone as comic relief and as a reflection of larger themes.

Through the use of such literary techniques Berlioz increased the narrative powers of [illegible]ic. In his final operatic work, Béatrice et Bénédict, an "opéra-comique" of 1862, Berlioz delighted contemporary audiences with his transfer of the verbal wit from Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing into light-hearted ensembles of a comic vein. Noteworthy for this study is the way Berlioz tried to stage a rehearsal scene with the bumbling conductor, Somarone in the spirit of Romantic irony as a distorted mirror image of his own experiences. There was a tendency in this final operatic work for Berlioz to become too concerned with linear details of plot to the detriment of musical variety--perhaps due to the disillusionment he felt about his own musical career. Overall, it is Les Troyens--with its intrinsic balance between musical and dramatic expression--that stands as a monument to Berlioz, operatic composer and librettist.

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I was honoured to have Professor Jean-Pierre Barricelli, distinguished scholar from the University of California, agree to act as external examiner for my defence. Unfortunately, Professor Barricelli was unable to attend due to illness; the detailed report he sent, however, has contributed greatly to the finishing of this thesis. Also present at my defence was Professor Paul Robberecht of the Department of Comparative Literature with whom I enjoyed working at a provisional stage of my doctoral programme. The secretarial staff from Comparative Literature should be acknowledged for their generous help and understanding.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hector Berlioz was born on the eleventh of December, 1803, in the small French town of La Côte Saint-André near Grenoble. By the time of his death in 1869, he had established himself as the greatest composer of French Romantic music. Over the course of his musical career, Berlioz turned ever increasingly towards the operatic stage which was the focus of most nineteenth-century French composers. He soon found that he was as qualified as any to assume the role of librettist. It is the intent of this thesis to investigate the unique relationship between words and music that Berlioz was able to realize in those operatic works where he acted as both composer and librettist.

Berlioz's biography is well known. Nevertheless, it may be useful to recapitulate here the main facts, which are relevant to this study. His musical education was initiated early by his father who taught him the basic principles of notation through instruction on a flageolet and then on a flute. Eventually a music master was engaged in order to further his playing and singing ability. Berlioz had already tried his hand at the composition of some songs. In his Mémoires he noted his discovery of the work of Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764): Rameau's treatise on harmony (1722)

motivated Berlioz to try to puzzle out the theory behind chord formations and progressions. His father was also responsible for his general education which included the study of languages, literature, history and geography. The intensity of emotion experienced by young Berlioz when reciting lines from Virgil for his father was a lingering memory that found expression years later as Berlioz recorded his memoirs.

In 1821 Dr. Louis Berlioz sent Hector off to Paris to study medicine; Berlioz was not destined, however, to follow in his father's footsteps. He attended a few classes in anatomy but was soon hopelessly drawn away by his attraction for music. He began attending the Opéra regularly, enrolled himself as a student at the Conservatoire and joined the composition classes of Jean-François Lesueur, who had been a favourite composer of Napoléon. Berlioz was thus on hand for the cultural events that were to rock Paris in the late 1820's as the Romanticists tried to establish themselves in the face of lingering classicist doctrines.

In his Mémoires Berlioz employs the images of thunder and lightning to convey the impression these events had upon him personally. The first was a performance of Shakespeare's Hamlet by a visiting English troupe at the Odéon theatre on the eleventh of September, 1827: "Shakespeare . . . me foudroya."[1] Towards the end of that same year, Berlioz

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[1] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires (Paris: Michel Levy Frères, 1870; reprint ed., Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1969), p. 65.

became acquainted with Part One of Goethe's Faust through Gérard de Nerval's translation which had appeared in November of 1827. He referred to his discovery of the German drama as "un des incidents remarquables de ma vie."[2] The final "coup de tonnerre" from this period occurred on the ninth of March, 1828, when Berlioz heard for the first time a performance of one of Ludwig van Beethoven's symphonies. Also in attendance at these events were other young French Romantic artists. Berlioz is said to have counted among his acquaintances Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Gérard de Nerval, Théophile Gautier, Georges Sand, Honoré de Balzac, the Deschamps, Joseph d'Ortigue, Ernest Legouvé, Jules Janin, Eugène Sue, Frédéric Soulié and Alexandre Dumas, as well as the musicians Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin, Niccolò Paganini and Giacomo Meyerbeer.[3]

This young generation of artists were known for their intermingling and for the cross-fertilization of ideas that took place. They freely exalted their literary idols such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Scott and Byron; a list of Berlioz's early compositions bears witness to these sources of inspiration. The two overtures, Waverley of 1827 and Rob Roy of 1832, were inspired by the novels of Walter Scott. In 1829 Berlioz completed the Huit Scènes de Faust, a set of choral numbers based upon Goethe's Faust. An overture to do

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[2] Ibid., p. 95.

[3] Raymond Leslie Evans, Les Romantiques français et la musique (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1934), p. 110.

with Shakespeare's King Lear followed in 1831. And the programme symphony, Harold en Italie, appeared in 1834 as a reflection of Berlioz's sympathies for Lord Byron. This preoccupation with literary themes continued over the course of Berlioz's career.

As a result of closer contact, Romantic artists--particularly writers and musicians--no longer viewed their roles as being so distinct from one another. The phenomenon of "Doppelbegabung" flourished during Romanticism as never before or since; the most famous example is E. T. A. Hoffmann who was not only an accomplished musician and writer, but also exhibited a minor interest in painting and drawing. The specific topic of "Doppelbegabung" has been treated by Herbert Günther who lists the German examples in his book, Künstlerische Doppelbegabungen. The phenomenon receives somewhat broader coverage in A. R. Neumann's dissertation on the evolution of the "Gesamtkunstwerk."[4]

Berlioz was another Romantic artist who showed talent in more than one art. His work as a musical journalist was in demand even when it was difficult to have his musical compositions performed. He tried his hand at writing articles as early as 1823 when his criticism of the fanatic admirers of Rossini was published in the daily paper, Corsaire. By 1829 he had become a professional journalist

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[4] Alfred Robert Neumann. "The Evolution of the Concept Gesamtkunstwerk in German Romanticism." Diss. U of Michigan, 1951.

for the weekly paper, Correspondant. In 1834 he began writing articles for the influential Journal des Debats and remained a regular contributor until 1863. These feuilletons were compiled in a posthumous collection, Les Musiciens et la Musique, which was published in 1903. With regards to musical technique, Berlioz produced a textbook for orchestration in 1843, Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes, which remains a classic for the music student. This work includes a section on conducting, Art du chef d'orchestre. In 1844 his travelling notes, Voyage musical en Allemagne et en Italie, were published, to be later incorporated into his Mémoires. Three collections of feuilletons and musical criticism followed which still exist as books in their own right. Les Soirées de l'orchestre appeared in 1852: the musical criticism in this volume was presented in artistic form as a dialogue among members of an orchestra. The performance of mediocre operas gave them occasion to enliven the evening with conversation and with narrative. In 1859 Berlioz wrote Les Grotesques de la musique, another collection of musical anecdotes, which brought out the witty, even malicious side of his criticism. À travers chants of 1862 represents a more serious collection of articles on the music of Beethoven, Gluck, Weber and Wagner. Berlioz's literary output would not be complete without mentioning his Mémoires, first published in 1870, a year after his death. They are highly entertaining and contain much information about the different stages of

his career. His correspondence is also valuable in this respect. On the strength of his writing talents, Berlioz was later encouraged to try his hand at composing the libretti for his own operatic works.

By 1830, Berlioz was beginning to make his mark on French musical circles. This was the year in which he was awarded the coveted prize for composition, "Prix de Rome," which provided for a year of musical study in Rome. It was also at this time that his Symphonie fantastique appeared. This early work placed Berlioz at the forefront of French Romantic composers because of its daring design to illustrate a narrative situation as outlined in the accompanying programme. This fusion of literary and musical resources satisfied the Romantic need for subjective expression but also served as a platform for the great orchestral genius of Berlioz that would now unfold over the course of his career. He was an innovator in terms of the wider variety of instruments that he was willing to employ and also in terms of the greater expressiveness he obtained through pitch and timbre. Richard Wagner was impressed by the music of Berlioz when he heard Berlioz's dramatic symphony, Roméo et Juliette, performed in Paris in 1839. Despite their differences, Berlioz did foreshadow Wagner in the striving for a closer union of musical sounds and literary ideas that would culminate in Wagner's concept of the "Musik-Drama."

Much has been written on the life and works of Berlioz, starting with French writers such as Adolphe Jullien who in 1882 produced the first biography of Berlioz, Hector Berlioz: la vie et le combat: les oeuvres (Paris, 1882). Similar studies by French scholars, all emphasizing the biographical detail of Berlioz's career, followed, from J.-G. Prod'homme, J. Tiersot and A. Boschot to the work in English by Jacques Barzun, Berlioz and the Romantic Century (Boston) in 1950.[5] Recent studies have dealt more specifically with the music itself. Brian Primmer discussed Berlioz's style in 1973, and Julian Rushton, ten years later, wrote on the musical language of Berlioz.[6]

Hugh Macdonald's work, Berlioz (London), of 1982, is of special interest because of his perceptive description of pertinent musical passages.[7] By dividing his book into two major sections, "Life" and "Music," Macdonald has avoided the problem of treating matters of form from a biographical perspective. Some writers have concerned themselves with obvious literary connections such as Berlioz's fascination with matters Shakespearian as observed in his letters and

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[5] J.-G. Prod'homme, Hector Berlioz, sa vie et ses oeuvres (Paris: Delagrave, 1904). J. Tiersot, Hector Berlioz et la societe de son temps (Paris: Hachette, 1904). A. Boschot, La jeunesse d'un romantique (Paris: Plon, 1906).

[6] Brian Primmer, The Berlioz Style (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). Julian Rushton, The musical language of Berlioz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[7] Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1982).

memoirs.[8] Albert Roustit has approached the question of a "Gesamtkunstwerk" by emphasizing the theatrical quality of much of Berlioz's composition whether intended for the stage or not.[9]

What is missing is a formal study of Berlioz's operatic music in order to show intrinsically the extent of literary influence in content and in form. The problem is to find a method for dealing with a "Gesamtkunstwerk" such as opera that involves the separate arts of music and of literature. Such an interart comparison must avoid the pitfall of confused and unprofitable analogies: to employ a descriptive set of terms from one art form and apply it to another results in metaphorical statements that do not do justice to the second art form. Heinrich Wölfflin set an important precedent for such studies by comparing art from different periods purely upon structural grounds rather than upon aesthetic ones.[10] Closer to us, Calvin S. Brown remains an outstanding pioneer in the specific area of musico-literary comparisons:[11] he compared the two arts through similarities of form rather than through metaphorical transfer. In the contemporary drive for more theoretically oriented studies,

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[8] Cf. Ph.D. Diss. of Wm. Dale Cockrell, Hector Berlioz and 'Le Systeme Shakespearien' (U. of Illinois, 1978).

[9] Albert Roustit. "Le théâtre de Berlioz." Diss. U. of Paris, 1973.

[10] Heinrich Wölfflin, Principles of Art History (New York: Dover, 1950).

[11] Calvin S. Brown, Music and Literature (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1948).

Ulrich Weisstein has looked specifically into the nature of opera by trying to expose the relationship that exists between music and drama. However, the methodology for exposing this relationship has not yet been set. The investigation undertaken in this thesis will take the form of close, detailed musico-literary analyses that will compare the libretti of Berlioz with the original literary texts from which they were derived. Externally, such comparison brings to light questions of genre, plot organization and character roles. An examination of internal structure, supported by excerpts from the musical score involved, will reveal the actual interaction of verbal text with melody line and other musical aspects.

In order to expose the true genius of Berlioz's musical-literary synthesis, I have chosen to analyse those works for which he was both composer and librettist. Each chapter features an analysis of words and musical sounds for the purpose of establishing the true nature of the interart relationship. The various topics are regarded as relevant to a discussion of the Romantic period, but most of all to a discussion of the combined art form of Romantic music and a text of that period. Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique (1830), an example of a programme symphony, provides a basis for the ground rules of Romanticism, which called for music to be very closely associated with a literary idea. La Damnation de Faust (1845-46) is the first operatic work in which Berlioz began acting as his own librettist. The first

chapter on La Damnation de Faust explains Berlioz's characterization of the figure of Faust through an analysis of the aria, "Invocation à la Nature." The depiction of Mephistopheles' diabolical humour is the topic of the second chapter dealing with Berlioz's dramatic legend. The final chapter in this section discusses the non-continuous nature of the work: because of the lack of operatic continuity, it remains a "concert" opera rather than one destined for the operatic stage. With Les Troyens (1856-58) Berlioz borrowed from the dramatic structuring of Shakespeare and truly created the necessary continuity for a "grand opéra." This part of the thesis on Les Troyens features five chapters dealing with various elements of structure that show the influence of Shakespearian form on Berlioz's composition: dramatic irony, the technique of a play-within-a-play, use of the supernatural, a Shakespearian sense of continuity, and the contrast of genre applied to opera by Berlioz. His final operatic work, Béatrice et Bénédict (1862), an "opéra-comique," shows music serving the literary ends of verbal wit, discussed in the first chapter of this section, and of Romantic irony in the following chapter. A third chapter questions the pursuit of symmetry in the work, which results in the "opéra-comique" becoming too linear.

Each chapter features a musico-literary analysis in which Berlioz's libretto text and corresponding music are compared with the literary text in question--i.e. Goethe's Faust, Virgil's Aeneid and Shakespeare's Much Ado About

Nothing. The New Berlioz Edition of Berlioz's works, begun in 1967 by the publisher Bärenreiter of Kassel, is used as the authoritative text for needed musical excerpts or libretto quotations. This new edition commemorates the centennial anniversary of Berlioz's death in full recognition of his stature in Romantic music. In the same spirit, the investigation undertaken in this thesis will attain its goal if it contributes to the understanding of Berlioz's role as composer and librettist from a comparatist point of view.

CHAPTER 2

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE: Romantic Programme Music

One prominent feature of the French Romantic movement was a close intermingling of various artists, including painters, musicians and writers. These artists experienced alienation in the face of audiences who were slow to forego the established principles of classicism and to appreciate the subjective quality of Romantic works. Through their varying media, Romantic artists sought to revitalize traditional forms in an attempt to make their respective arts more expressive of individual states of mind and of feelings.

Romantic literati gave early recognition to the special properties of music for expressing emotion. In Germany, the Romantic writers associated with the Jena School, such as Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1798), called for the integration of music into the various arts. Ludwig Tieck (1773-1845) tried to point the way to a lessening of the boundaries between arts in his work, Franz Sternbald; intense moments were supported by a description of accompanying sounds and visual impressions.

It was the Schlegel brothers who at the turn of the century actually theorized about the unification of the arts. In 1799 August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845) was

quoted in the Athenäum as saying: "Und so sollte man die Künste einander nähern und Übergänge aus einer in die andere suchen. Bildsäulen belebten sich vielleicht zu Gemälden, . . . Gemälde würden zu Gedichten, Gedichte zu Musiken, und wer weiss? so eine feierliche Kirchenmusik stiege auf einmal wieder als Tempel in die Luft."[1] Once this desire for unity of the arts had been voiced, various attempts followed. Novalis (1772-1801) has been called by Alfred Neumann in his study of the "Gesamtkunstwerk" the foremost exponent of unified-art thinking.[2] It was Novalis who used the expression "Gemeinschaftliche Kunstwerk," forerunner of the term "Gesamtkunstwerk" which was not in fact coined until 1850 by Richard Wagner.[3] Novalis tried to incorporate musical elements into his novel fragment, Heinrich von Ofterdingnen, with the ideal in mind of an art form that would be part drama and part opera.

E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822) was a Romantic artist, famous for his creative endeavours in the three arts of literature, music and drawing. Like Berlioz, Hoffmann devoted considerable time to the activity of musical criticism. In 1814 Hoffmann wrote the music for the opera, Undine, based upon the tale by Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué

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[1] August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig: Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1846), 9:13.

[2] Neumann, "The Evolution of the Concept Gesamtkunstwerk in German Romanticism," p. 168.

[3] The term is used by Wagner in his work, Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft, Dichtungen und Schriften (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1983), 6:28.

who also supplied the libretto. This opera represented Hoffmann's idea of a "Gesamtkunstwerk" from the point of view of combining the efforts of a Romantic poet and a Romantic composer. Accordingly, such a fusion of words and music did not have to originate from one artist, as in "Doppelbegabung." Hoffmann stressed the dependency of the music on the drama as a whole and not tied to individual words or emotions. Though primarily a composer, Carl Maria von Weber shared the ideas of Hoffmann and made plans for a novel entitled "Tonkünstlersleben." Richard Wagner continued the tradition of Weber and again tended towards music-dominated works. The Romantic concept of a "Gesamtkunstwerk" culminates in the work of Wagner who is given credit with his "Musikdrama" for achieving the closest possible connection between music and dramatic expression. Every bar of music is justified by its contribution to explaining the action of the story; and every bar of music has its own musical logic in the context of the whole.

Early Romantic music showed the influence of other art forms. Composers of the Romantic period tried to make their music more descriptive by linking it to a literary idea, either through the title or through an actual written programme accompanying the work. This linking is seen in the poetic titles used by Franz Schubert for his "Lieder"--such as his setting of Goethe's "Erlkönig"--and by Robert Schumann for his short piano pieces. The musical sounds were not to be heard as absolute in themselves. In "absolute"

music, musical patterns are developed according to an inner, "musical" logic that bears no relation to any perceptible message. The Romantics, however, preferred "programme" music that would furnish a literary context with which the musical sounds were to be associated.

The notion of providing a programme for a symphonic work did not originate with Berlioz. The tradition had been established by his composition master, Lesueur, as well as by Ludwig Spohr, Weber, Beethoven and others before him. To Lesueur, a descriptive programme was an absolute necessity in order to enhance the imitative quality of music.[4] Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony is often cited as an early example of a programme symphony, although there certainly existed types of descriptive music before him. Since its appearance in 1808, this sixth symphony of Beethoven bears the title, "Sinfonie Pastorale--oder Erinnerung an das Landleben" and, in addition, descriptive headings for each of the five movements. For example, the first movement is characterized by the usual tempo indication, "Allegro ma non troppo," as well as by the phrase, "Erwachen heiterer Gefühle bei der Ankunft."[5] Beethoven, however, was concerned with the expression of inner feelings evoked by nature, not with the depiction of nature itself. Some depiction of nature does creep in incidentally with the imitative sounds

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[4] Arthur Ware Locke, Music and the Romantic Movement in France (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1920), p. 56.

[5] Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 6, Ed. Eulenburg, p. 1.

of a brook and of birds. Thus, he added after the title "(Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei)."[6] With this cautionary note he was trying to retain the appreciation of his musical creation within the realm of absolute music. His sixth symphony, despite its title and headings, is not meant to encroach upon the sister art of painting ("Malerei"). With the Symphonie fantastique Berlioz would go much further. He not only depicted through a programme the setting in which his musical sounds are to be heard: he attempted to tell a story over the course of the symphony, thus borrowing from the literary art of narration.

The idea of presenting an artistic work with a written introduction, while not absolutely new, was very much à la mode in literary circles as well. Victor Hugo's Préface de'Cromwell', written in October of 1827, would have been well known to Berlioz by the time he came to compose his Symphonie fantastique in the early months of 1830. At the beginning of this Préface, Hugo stated his reason for including it with the drama, Cromwell: ". . . notes et préfaces sont quelquefois un moyen commode d'augmenter le poids d'un livre et d'accroître, en apparence du moins, l'importance d'un travail."[7] It was not enough to let the work stand on its own; Hugo wished to take a stand in the polemics that were waged in Paris between the Romanticists and the classicists. In the Préface, he briefly delved into

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[6] Ibid., p. v.

[7] Victor Hugo, Préface de 'Cromwell', Vol. 3 of Oeuvres complètes. (Paris: Le Club Française du Livre, 1967) 3 : 44.

literary history in order to derive an origin of drama. From this basis he then went on to expound his own views for a theory of drama, in which a major area of emphasis is a discussion of the grotesque and its ability to off-set the sublime. Hugo also took up the topical concern of adherence to the three unities, as well as the basic relationship of art and nature. In connection with the drama in question, Hugo introduced the figure of Cromwell and justified him as an appropriate choice for a Romantic drama. Finally, he appealed to the reader to judge works according to their individual merits rather than by faults deducted from a prescribed set of rules. The concept of the preface or the programme was motivated by the Romantic urge to educate the public regarding new artistic ideals and to guide their appreciation of less traditional forms.

Berlioz also earned the title of being a propagandist through his endeavours as a musical critic.* The programme for his Symphonie fantastique was written in this same spirit of trying to guide the interpretation of his audience. But whereas Hugo, in his Préface de 'Cromwell', takes a theoretical stand on current issues of Romantic drama, Berlioz made with his Symphonie fantastique an intensely personal statement. The autobiographical details are obvious as witnessed in the correspondence of Berlioz. On the sixteeenth of April, 1830, he enclosed in a letter to his friend, Humbert Ferrand, both a musical and a literary

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* Evans, Les Romantiques francais et la musique, p. 56.

description of the events of the Symphonie fantastique. The hero of the programme is a young musician, admittedly, Berlioz himself: "A présent, mon ami, voici comment j'ai tissé mon roman, ou plutôt mon histoire, dont il ne vous est pas difficile de reconnaître le héros."[9] The two-year period prior to the composition of the Symphonie fantastique was characterized by extreme mental anquish for Berlioz because of his highly emotional infatuation with the Irish actress, Harriet Smithson. She figures in the work as the beloved, translated into the "idée fixe," a melody that reoccurs throughout the symphony in various transformed states. Overcome with bitterness, Berlioz described the beloved in this letter to Ferrand as "une courtisane digne de figurer dans une telle orgie."[10] Once he and Harriet were married in 1833, his ardour cooled; correspondingly, the overly personal references to the beloved are also missing in later versions of the programme.

The programme for the Symphonie fantastique begins with an "Avertissement" which states the intent of the composer in this instrumental drama:

> Le Compositeur a eu pour but de développer, dans ce qu'elles ont de musical, différentes situations de la vie d'un artiste. Le plan du drame instrumental, privé du secours de la parole, a besoin d'être exposé d'avance. Le programme suivant doit donc être considéré comme le texte parlé d'un Opéra, servant à amener des morceaux de musique, dont il motive le

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[9] H. Berlioz, Correspondance générale, ed. Pierre Citron (Paris: Flammarion, 1972), 1: 319.

[10] Ibid., p. 320.

caractère et l'expression.''

The programme is needed to supply narrative details but is integral to the musical performance in that the character and expression of the music follow from it. At this point we see that Berlioz intended the programme to be the literary component of a total creation. Wolfgang Dömling refers to the programme as a crucial dimension of the work: "Das Programm der Symphonie fantastique ist kein Akzidens, sondern eine entscheidende Dimension des Werks selber."[12] Hugo's goal for his Préface de 'Cromwell' differs: he wanted to enhance the value of his drama by offering background material in connection with it, but his preface is not regarded as an integral part of the drama itself.

Berlioz's programme has been celebrated as a true document of Romanticism. In addition to autobiographical details, the programme with its five parts delves freely into literary sources from the Romantic period. These sources have been closely analysed by Nicholas Temperley and will only be briefly indicated here. His study is included as a foreword to the 1971 Bärenreiter edition of the score. Beyond indirect reference to the tradition of Jean-Jacques

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[11] H. Berlioz, Symphonie fantastique, Ed. N. Temperley (Bärenreiter, 1972), p. 3. All subsequent quotations from the programme are from this same source. The various versions of the programme have been carefully analyzed by Nicholas Temperley and are included at the back of the Bärenreiter edition of the score. I follow his example in using the first corrected edition of the programme from 1845 that appears on pages 3 and 4 of the score.

[12] W. Dömling, Hector Berlioz Die symphonisch-dramatischen Werke (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1979), p. 261.

Rousseau, Berlioz borrowed images directly from Chateaubriand's work, René, particularly in the first part, entitled "Reveries--Passions." The setting of the second part, "Un Bal," was taken by Berlioz from a scene found in Alfred de Musset's translation of the Confessions of an Opium Eater by Thomas de Quincey. Musset's rather free rendition of de Quincey's work was called L'Anglais Mangeur d'Opium. Details from the third part of Berlioz's programme, "Scène aux Champs," again suggest a link to Chateaubriand, and the fourth part, "Marche au Supplice"--with its mention of the artist taking opium--re-established the connection to Musset's translation. The final part, "Songe d'une Nuit du Sabbat," takes place in a setting reminiscent of Victor Hugo's ballad, "La Ronde du Sabbat."

At the beginning of the programme for the Symphonie fantastique, Berlioz stated that the character and expression of the music are to be determined by the literary message. Concerning external structure, Berlioz seems to have had a drama in mind through his choice of five movements instead of the typical four of symphonic form. As early as 1835, Robert Schumann used this analogy to a play, in his analysis of the Symphonie fantastique: "Vier Sätze sind ihm zu wenig; er nimmt, wie zu einem Schauspiele, fünf."[13] French "grand opéra" was also built around a five-act structure. When listed by tempi and by key, the

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[13] R. Schumann, "Symphonie von H. Berlioz", Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker (Leipzig: Breitkopf u. Härtel, 1883), p. 70.

five movements show some similarities to traditional form:

1. Largo--Allegro ("Rêveries--Passions")--c,C
2. Valse/Allegro non troppo ("Un Bal")--A
3. Adagio ("Scène aux Champs")--F
4. March/Allegretto non troppo ("Marche au Supplice")--g,G
5. Finale/Larghetto--Allegro ("Songe d'une Nuit du Sabbat")--C

The slow introduction and the allegro part of the opening movement conform to tradition, as well as the quick tempo of the finale. The intervening movements offer a slow as well as moderately paced tempi, which is also expected. The order of the middle movements is unusual in that the Adagio does not immediately follow as a second movement to the opening Allegro. For reasons of tempo contrast, the Adagio was placed by Berlioz between the waltz and the march.

As one looks more closely at each movement, the transformation of symphonic form into an instrumental drama begins to be more apparent. The Largo section of the opening movement is much longer than an ordinary introduction. It lasts for sixty-three bars and constitutes Berlioz's depiction of the state of "Rêveries." Contrasting strongly with the Allegro to follow, the opening Largo is an integral component in the expression of the subject stated in the programme: the passage from a state of melancholic reverie to delirious passion, portrayed in the Allegro.

The most striking device employed by Berlioz to link the composition of his music to the words of the programme is the use of the "idée fixe." The "idée fixe" is a melodic phrase that occurs in full or in part in each movement of

the Symphonie fantastique with variations of harmony, rhythm, metre and tempo, in addition to changes of dynamics, register and timbre. The first entry of the "idée fixe" takes place in the violin and flute parts near the beginning of the Allegro:

Berlioz clearly indicated in the programme that this recurring melodic phrase represents to the artist the image of his beloved:

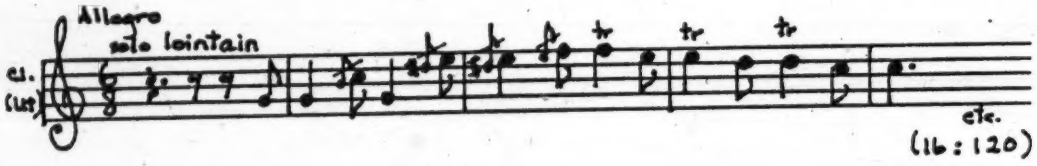
> Par une singulière bizarrerie, l'image chérie ne se présente jamais à l'esprit de l'artiste que liée à une pensée musicale, dans laquelle il trouve un certain caractère passionné, mais noble et timide comme celui qu'il prête à l'objet aimé.
>
> Ce reflet mélodique avec son modèle le poursuivent sans cesse comme une double idée fixe.

The "idée fixe" remained for Berlioz a concept closely tied to his composition of this symphony and to the fixation with a beloved that he wished to express. Wagner's use of the "Leitmotiv" suggested rather a general musical technique that was illustrated in many different themes and in different works:

Berlioz's use of the "idée fixe" offers an interesting reflection of the Romantic obsession with dreams and visions: through a change of medium, the image of the beloved does not reoccur visually but rather audibly. This notion may have been suggested to Berlioz by his reading of De Quincey through Musset's translation. Under the influence

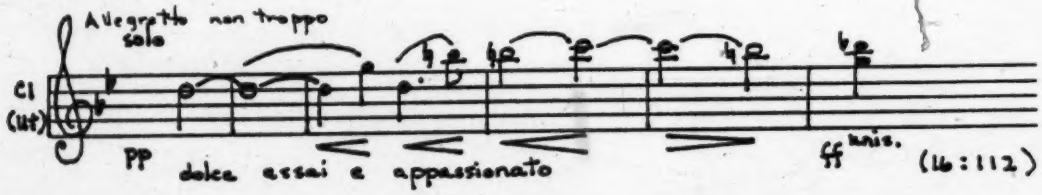
of opium, De Quincey experienced musical sounds which to him embodied events from his past life. It is also a form of the popular Romantic experience of "synesthésie" or the spontaneous association caused by one sensation evoking another.

In the final movement, the basic character of the "idée fixe" is distorted through a jerky dance rhythm given out by the blatant tones of an E flat clarinet, complete with dissonant grace notes and trills:



The beloved makes her appearance at the funeral of the artist in order to join in the diabolical orgy, that parodies the church music of the Dies Irae and parallels the technique of the Black Mass. There is also a slight suggestion of self-parodying of the earlier serious use of the "idée fixe."

The last "serious" entry of the "idée fixe" takes place near the end of the fourth movement. The clarinet solo begins the "idée fixe," but is interrupted by a forte chord from the whole orchestra:



The forte chord represents the fall of the executioner's axe

as outlined in the progamme: "À la fin de la marche, les quatre premières mesures de l'idée fixe reparaissent comme une dernière pensée d'amour interrompue par le coup fatal." Such tone-painting is the most obvious means of relating sounds to words. The closing of the slow third movement--certainly one of the most remarkably "advanced" passages in the score--features rolling drum sounds to illustrate thunder ("Bruit éloigné de tonnerre. . ."). And in the finale, Berlioz copied Hugo's idea of bells ringing to represent the funeral setting and to signal the playing of the Dies Irae which will be parodied. In a later footnote to the programme, Berlioz stressed his use of imitating sounds from nature as the means to an end, but not an end in itself.

At the opening performance of the Symphonie fantastique in 1830, Berlioz indicated in the programme that its distribution was indispensable to a complete understanding of the work: "La distribution de ce programme à l'auditoire, dans les concerts où figure cette symphonie, est indispensable à l'intelligence complète du plan dramatique de l'ouvrage." The initial reception of the work carried an echo of the fate met by Hugo and his Préface de 'Cromwell' of three years earlier: the Préface turned out to be of more lasting significance than the drama itself. With Berlioz, it was a case of the public misunderstanding his intent that put his programme temporarily in the forefront. Berlioz felt compelled in 1835 to issue a footnote that accompanied the

programme in an attempt to explain the programme itself. He argued that the programme was not just a verbal reproduction of what the composer was trying to accomplish with orchestral sounds. It was rather a filling in of gaps left by music's inability to fully develop dramatic thought: ". . . c'est justement . . . afin de combler les lacunes laissées nécessairement dans le développement de la pensée dramatique par la langue musicale, qu'il [le compositeur] a dû recourir à la prose écrite pour faire comprendre et justifier le plan de la symphonie." Berlioz outlined his goal to express in music passions and sentiments, but not abstractions and moral qualities which are the domaine of paints and of words.

Berlioz went on to liken his programme to the choruses of ancient Greek tragedy: "Si les quelques lignes de ce programme eussent été de nature à pouvoir être récitées ou chantées entre chacun des morceaux de la symphonie, comme les choeurs des tragédies antiques, sans doute on ne se fût pas mépris de la sorte sur le sens qu'elles contiennent. Mais au lieu de les écouter il faut les lire . . ." In any event, Berlioz was seeking to convince his audience of the integral nature of the programme in relation to the musical sounds. Berlioz himself wavered in trusting his listeners to read and appreciate the content of the programme. Having the programme "spoken"--as in a Greek chorus--seems to have been behind his composition of <u>Lélio</u>, sequel to the <u>Symphonie fantastique</u>.

Lélio marks a further development in the relationship between words and music: here Berlioz tried to embody the concept of spoken words alternating with music. The work was originally entitled "Le retour à la vie--Mélologue." The term "mélologue" was found by Berlioz in the poems of Thomas Moore. The name, Lélio, was used later as the title; by 1855, the official title had become Lélio--Monodrame. Berlioz composed the spoken monologue while in Italy in 1831. (He had been awarded the coveted "Prix de Rome" which provided for a year of musical studies in Rome). The name "Lelio" occurs frequently in Italian comedy, and in particular, was used by the playwright Carlo Goldoni. George Sand used the name for a leading character in the story, La Marquise, which appeared in 1832; and her later novel of 1833 was entitled Lélia.

The content of the monologue is highly autobiographical. The first spoken passage makes reference to the final scene of the Symphonie fantastique in which the artist has seen his beloved take part in the funeral orgy. Thus, the title "Le retour à la vie"--the artist recognizes all the events of the Symphonie fantastique to be an illusion. His opening words are "Dieu! je vis encore. . ."[14] (To make allowance for the connection of Lélio to the Symphonie fantastique, Berlioz altered the programme to read that all movements preceded from an opium vision). These words have significance for Berlioz's own

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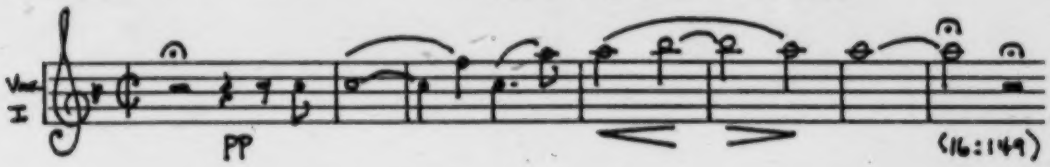
[14] H. Berlioz, Lélio, Kalmus Ed. Miniature Score, p.2.

life since he had just received a letter of rejection from his betrothed, Camille Moke, who had decided to marry some one else in Berlioz's absence from Paris. The enraged Hector rushed off from Rome with dramatic plans to kill Camille, her future husband and himself as well. He got as far as Nice where he paused long enough to regain his sanity and to begin work on Lélio.

The monologue continues on the theme of the disillusioned artist figure. Berlioz had Horatio sing the adaptation of Goethe's ballad, "Le Pecheur," ("Der Taucher"). The next artist to be mentioned is Shakespeare who was also misunderstood by the audience of his day. Lélio proceeds in monologue to the conclusion that as a musician he must take up composition--if only for himself: "Écrivons, ne fût-ce que pour moi seul . . ." The parallel to Berlioz and to his own career as a composer is self-evident. The preceding material in the monodrama is staged by having the artist figure alone in the foreground with the orchestra, soloists and chorus performing from behind a curtain. At this point in the work, however, the curtain rises; the artist then performs as the conductor of the orchestra and chorus, in a travesty of Berlioz's own experiences in front of indifferent, mediocre singers and players. There is a hint of Hamlet's experiences in staging a play. This motif was taken up again by Berlioz in his opéra-comique, Béatrice et Bénédict, with the comic conductor, Somarone.

Musically, the work ends with the violins playing part of the "idée fixe" from the Symphonie fantastique:



Berlioz also worked an incomplete statement of the "idée fixe" into the opening piano accompaniment for Horatio's song. But in Lélio, all six musical numbers were taken from pre-composed works of Berlioz. When the "idée fixe" does appear, it quite literally has the character of an after-thought. It is therefore difficult to speak of a basic integration of words and musical sounds in this work. The weight of the expression in Lélio lies with the spoken monologue, the music serving the function of interlude material.

The content of the spoken parts suited well fellow Romantic artists present at the first combined performance in December of 1832 of the Symphonie fantastique and Le retour à la vie. The revised programme of the Symphonie fantastique and the new libretto for the mélologue were hailed as a Romantic document of the suffering artist. Once the novelty had worn off, however, it was the music of the Symphonie fantastique that continued to find a hearing in the concert-hall. By 1855, Berlioz was calling for distribution of the programme only if the symphony was performed dramatically with Lélio. The music of the Symphonie fantastique was descriptive enough to succeed on

its own.

After these early attempts at combining words and music, Berlioz gradually worked towards an even closer union of words and musical sounds, i.e., opera. This development took place in stages, both in terms of Berlioz becoming his own librettist and in terms of his achieving the necessary dramatic balance between narrative and musical expression. He did compose the music for two early operas to the text of other librettists: Les francs-juges in 1826 and Benvenuto Cellini in the mid-thirties. But it is the concern of this thesis to examine those operatic works in which Berlioz created both libretto text and musical score. In the first work to be dealt with in detail, La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz's genius remains on the side of musical expression.

CHAPTER 3

LA DAMNATION DE FAUST: Faust's Relationship to Nature

In his Mémoires Berlioz recalled his first reading of Goethe's Faust Part One and the deep impression that it made upon him:

> Je dois encore signaler comme un des incidents remarquables de ma vie, l'impression étrange et profonde que je reçus en lisant pour la première fois le Faust de Goethe traduit en français par Gérard de Nerval. Le merveilleux livre me fascina de prime-abord; je ne le quittai plus; je le lisais sans cesse, à table, au théâtre, dans les rues, partout.[1]

Gérard de Nerval's translation of Faust I was published in November of 1827; and by September of the following year Berlioz had written to Humbert Ferrand, a French poet and pamphleteer, of Shakespeare and Goethe being the "confidants of his grief."[2] His acquaintance with Goethe's Faust I would appear to have taken place late in the year of 1827. Nerval subsequently made minor corrections in the wording of his translation which led to a second edition in 1835. A third edition appeared in 1840 with little change to the prose of

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[1] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 95.

[2] Berlioz wrote to Ferrand in a letter dated the sixteenth of September, 1828, calling upon his friend to share his enthusiasm for Shakespeare and Goethe: "Nous lirons Hamlet et Faust ensemble. Shakespeare et Goethe! les muets confidents de mes tourments, les explicateurs de ma vie. Venez, oh! venez! personne ici ne comprend cette rage de génie." Correspondance Générale, Vol. I, 1803-1832, p. 208.

the second edition but with the addition of translated fragments of Faust, Part Two.

Berlioz's preoccupation with Goethe was not to be the all-consuming passion that he had experienced upon discovering Shakespeare. When describing the impact of Shakespeare on his life, Berlioz in his Mémoires referred to Shakespeare and not just to one of his dramas: "Shakespeare . . . me foudroya."[3] The discovery of the English playwright brought with it the personal commitment of marrying Harriet Smithson, the Ophelia of the Paris production of 1827. The inspiration of Shakespearian subject matter resulted in works such as Roméo et Juliette, Berlioz's famous dramatic symphony, his "opéra-comique." Béatrice et Bénédict, and smaller works such as the overture, Le roi Lear. Most interesting for this thesis, is the way Berlioz let matters of Shakespearian form influence the dramatic structuring of his "grand opéra," Les Troyens.

In the case of the German writer, it was really the subject matter of the work, Faust, that caught his attention and inspired him to write the "Huit Scènes de Faust," a collection of songs, choral numbers and dances that was published in April of 1829. Gérard de Nerval's translation of Goethe's Faust I was not the first one to appear in France. Madame de Staël had rendered a prose translation of some scenes in her book of 1810, De l'Allemagne; chapter thirteen of this work was entitled "Faust" and contained an

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[3] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 65.

analysis of the drama as well as translated passages. Specific references to the writings of Mme de Staël will be made later in this chapter concerning the characterization of Faust and particularly in the chapter to follow on Méphistophélès, to whom she attributed the principal role of the drama. It suffices at this point to mention that Mme de Staël's reception of Goethe's drama was representative of the early period of French criticism of Faust: she appeared to be more impressed by the presence of sorcery and diabolism in the work than by its philosophical aspects.

These characteristics, along with the unorthodox form of the work, continued to trouble the adherents of French classicism: "La critique jusqu'à 1820 était restée réticente sinon hostile en face de l'oeuvre de Goethe."[4] But as French Romanticism began to assert itself, a new appreciation of Goethe's Faust I was ushered in and with it a series of French translations. In 1823 Sainte-Aulaire produced a smoothly flowing translation that, according to Fernand Baldensperger, was too free in respect of the original; whole scenes from Goethe, in which unearthly beings appeared, were eliminated.[5] Baldensperger considers the attempt by Albert Stapfer of the same year to be more successful in that he stuck more conscientiously to the original. A second edition of Stapfer's translation,

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[4] Charles Dédéyan, Le Thème de Faust (Paris: Lettres modernes, 1956), p. 151.

[5] Fernand Baldensperger, Goethe en France (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1920), p. 127.

appearing in 1828, was accompanied by the seventeen lithographs of Eugène Delacroix on the subject of Goethe's Faust. And finally in 1828, Gérard de Nerval was to bring out his classic translation of Faust I in prose and in verse which became the Faust of French Romanticism:

> En dépit de ses gaucheries et de ses inexactitudes, ce fut là le véritable Faust des romantiques, l'initiateur de Berlioz et de Théophile Gautier--le Faust des poètes, en un mot, beaucoup plus que la traduction Stapfer, si probe et si consciencieuse, qui était plutôt le Faust des rédacteurs du Globe.[4]

According to Geneviève Bianquis, these two translations by Stapfer and by Nerval have remained unsurpassed even into this century.[5] Generally, Nerval is given credit for producing a translation that best serves the expression of the original poetic content: "In fairness to Nerval it must be said that if there are some parts where he fails to do justice to the original, there are many others where his poetic intuition grasps the sense as well as the literal meaning of Goethe's text and renders it with all its beauty intact within the limits inherent in any translation."[6] By mostly using prose in his translation, Nerval rose above some of these limits, a fact recognised by Goethe himself.[7]

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[4] Ibid., p. 131.

[5] Geneviève Bianquis, Faust à travers quatre siècles (Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1955), p. 228.

[6] Alfred Dubruck, Gérard de Nerval and the German Heritage (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965), p. 79.

[7] Mentioned in a letter dated March 24, 1828, from Frau von Müller to Graf Reinhard. Goethes Gespräche, ed.

Literary inspiration was thus at hand for Berlioz in the form of Nerval's translation. In the sphere of music, the question arises as to the existence in 1828 of compositions that could have influenced Berlioz. Goethe himself had called for some sort of musical accompaniment for Faust when he addressed a letter of November eighteenth, 1810, to Karl Friedrich Zelter, his advisor on musical matters. Zelter declined the opportunity; moreover, the Polish prince and musical dilettante, Anton Radziwill, produced some music for scenes from Faust that did not satisfy Goethe.[9]

Jean-Pierre Barricelli discusses musical settings of the Faust legend in an article that pays particular attention to those works that dealt with the problem of evil.[10] Of timely significance for Berlioz was the opera, Faust, composed by Ludwig Spohr in 1813 for performance in Vienna. In fact, the work was first performed in Prague in 1816 and again in Frankfurt in 1818. In his Mémoires there is no mention of Berlioz having seen Spohr's opera at this early stage of his career before composing the "Huit Scènes de Faust" in 1828 to 1829. Berlioz made reference to seeing Spohr's Faust but at a time in his Mémoires when he was

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[9](cont'd) Biedermann, rev. ed. W. Herwig, vol.3, part 2 (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1972), p. 259.

[10] Wolfgang Dömling, "Hector Berlioz, La Damnation de Faust" (programme notes for the Deutsche Grammaphon recording), p. 2.

[11] J.-P. Barricelli, "Faust and the Music of Evil," Journal of European Studies, 13 (1983), pp. 1-26.

describing his travels in Germany from 1841 to 1842.[12]

Spohr's work was composed, according to James Simon, to a miserable and inadequate libretto provided by Karl Bernard. The text had little to do with Goethe's work and recalls rather the old "Volksbuch," as well as F. M. Klinger's novel, Fausts Leben, Thaten und Höllenfahrt of 1791. The form of the work is that of a Singspiel, an operatic work in which the singing of arias alternates with spoken dialogue, rather than with recitative. This is in the same tradition as the French "opéra-comique" or the lighter operetta. The Italian counterpart, "opera buffa," features a text that is sung throughout. Zelter heard the work in 1829 but found it lacking; and today, at most, the overture or the aria of Kunigunde may be heard.[13]

In Paris itself a dramatic adaptation of Goethe's work under the title, "Faust," enjoyed repeated performance in 1820 at the Odéon theatre. Berlioz, however, did not arrive in Paris as a medical student until 1822. When his natural predilection for musical--rather than medical--studies came to the fore, financial backing from his parents in La Côte Saint-André was withdrawn. Berlioz was forced to seek work as a chorister at the Théâtre des Nouveautés: here, in 1827, Goethe's Faust was being staged as a drama, with the libretto by Théaulon and Gondelier, and music by Béaucourt, a conductor at the theatre. Wolfgang Dömling claims that

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[12] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 270.

[13] James Simon, Faust in der Musik (Berlin: Bard, Marquardt & Co., 1905), p. 13.

Berlioz would have known the work,[14] but David Cairns has pointed out in his editing of the Mémoires, that Faust was added to the repetoire after Berlioz had left the company.[15]

This work, Faust, had the character of a melodrama and enjoyed tremendous success with the Parisian audiences. The quality of the libretto was obviously inferior and quite distant from Goethe's text: in the words of Simon "Das Libretto von Theaulon and Gondelier war ein Ragout verschiedener Szenen des Originals."[16] As for the music by Béaucourt, not much more could be expected if one takes Berlioz's opinion of the theatre into account. He was not very proud of his attachment to that theatre and refers in his Mémoires to the sheer stupidity of the music produced there:

> . . . la stupidité de la musique que j'avais à subir dans ces petits opéras semblables à des vaudevilles, et dans ces grands vaudevilles singeant des opéras, . . .[17]

Enthusiasm for the theme of Faust was running high, and plans were conceived in Paris for the creation of a Faust ballet. Berlioz successfully applied for the commission to compose the music for this ballet. The plans were cancelled, however, and Berlioz went on to compose his own version of

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[14] Dömling, "Hector Berlioz, La Damnation de Faust," p. 2.

[15] The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz. Ed. David Cairns (New York, 1969), p. 77, footnote 3.

[16] Simon, Faust in der Musik, p. 18.

[17] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 48.

the Faust material--the "Huit Scènes de Faust," based upon the choral selections in verse from Nerval's translation. Berlioz sent a copy of the work to Goethe, who relied upon the judgment of Zelter. The conservative Zelter expressed himself to Goethe as follows:

> Gewisse Leute können ihre Geistesgegenwart und ihren Anteil nur durch lautes Husten, Schnauben, Krächzen und Ausspeien zu verstehn geben; von diesen einer scheint Herr Hektor Berlioz zu sein. Der Schwefel-geruch des Mephisto zieht ihn an, nun muss er niesen und prusten, dass sich alle Instrumente im Orchester regen und spuken--nur am "Faust" rührt sich kein Haar. Übrigens habe Dank für die Sendung; es findet sich wohl Gelegenheit, bei einem Vortrage Gebrauch zu machen von einem Abse, einer Abgeburt, welche aus greulichem Inzeste entsteht.''

Goethe and Zelter did not even acknowledge receipt of the score. This silence along with a less than satisfactory performance of the work in Paris on the first of November, 1829, caused Berlioz to suppress the composition and destroy most of its copies. He waited seventeen years before he took the original eight scenes in hand and transformed them into the more complete work, La Damnation de Faust. In the meantime, the Théâtre Italien put on an Italian version of Goethe's Faust, as well as the Faust of Spohr and the Fausto of Louise Bertin in 1831. Lesser works followed which again tended to stray from Goethe's text.

Berlioz's original composition on the theme of Faust, the "Huit Scènes de Faust," consisted of the following numbers, five solo and four choral:

'' Letter of Karl Friedrich Zelter, dated June 21st, 1829, to Goethe. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zelter, Vol. III (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1970), pp. 169-170.

1. Chants de la fête de pâques
2. Paysans sous les tilleuls
3. Concert de Sylphes
4. Écot de joyeux compagnons
5. Chanson de Méphistophélès
6. Le roi de Thulé (chanson gothique)
7. Romance de Marguerite & Choeur des soldats
8. Sérénade de Méphistophélès

When he took up the theme again in November of 1845, he obviously intended to produce a more complete work, but it is doubtful whether he envisaged its production as an opera. Hugh Macdonald maintains that it was planned as a concert opera: "He saw the new work as a 'concert opera,' more of an opera than Roméo et Juliette, but still designed for the concert hall."[19] In his Mémoires, Berlioz talked of the composition of the work but did not enlarge upon the question of its intended public performance. In looking back, he referred to the work as "ma légende de Faust,"[20] and the work is now officially termed "légende dramatique." In the nineteenth century, the word "légende" was usually undertood in connection with retelling the lives of saints or martyrs. In addition, it sometimes retained a connotation from the Middle Ages when it was a popular literary form for embellishing the exploits of famous characters. By employing the term "légende" Berlioz stressed the narrative aspect of his work and his own attempt to tell the story of Faust in words and in music. With the adjective "dramatique" he hinted at the powers of operatic music to make the narration

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[19] Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 45.

[20] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 397.

like a drama. In fact, Berlioz succeeded in creating a unique genre, "légende dramatique," in his striving to find the particular musical form to correspond to his literary inspiration.

In practice, Berlioz could hardly have aspired to an operatic production at this time; when La Damnation de Faust was first performed in Paris at the Opéra-Comique in November of 1846 in concert form, it met with total indifference on the part of the Parisian audience. At least the concert form of the work allowed Berlioz to break it up and include various selections in concert programmes that he performed in Paris and especially abroad. This piecemeal approach provided a partial hearing of the work.

It was on an earlier concert tour from 1845 to 1846 that Berlioz began the transformation of the "Huit Scènes de Faust" into the dramatic legend, La Damnation de Faust. He had before him the score of the eight scenes, based upon the first edition of Gérard de Nerval's Faust translation, as well as a portion of the libretto that Berlioz has already commissioned from Almire Gandonnière, an unknown journalist. It is not known from what translation of Faust Gandonnière worked in composing these verses for Berlioz. Berlioz referred, in his Mémoires quoted below, to these scenes written just prior to his concert tour in 1845; by then, Nerval's third edition of the Faust translation was available.

Journeying through Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Silesia, Berlioz found that he could not wait for the services of his Parisian librettist. Thus began his career as librettist for his own operatic works:

> Dès que je me fus décidè à l'entreprendre, je dus me résoudre aussi à écrire moi-même presque tout le livret; les fragments de la traduction française du Faust de Goethe par Gérard de Nerval, que j'avais déjà mis en musique vingt ans auparavant, et que je comptais faire entrer, en les retouchant, dans ma nouvelle partition, et deux ou trois autres scènes écrites sur mes indications par M. Gandonnière, avant mon départ de Paris, ne formaient pas dans leur ensemble la sixième partie de l'oeuvre.[21]

Berlioz claimed to have written almost all of the libretto, which would reduce the material of the "Huit Scènes de Faust" and the scenes of Gandonnière to a sixth of the total. After a thorough study of the original manuscripts, Julian Rushton suggests that it is more like half of the libretto that Berlioz himself composed, the other half supplied by the earlier work and by Gandonnière.[22]

The task before Berlioz in 1845 was to enlarge upon the "Huit Scènes de Faust" through the composition of additional solo and choral material, as well as sections of recitative and of instrumental passages. These latter sections were necessary for transition in order to achieve a dramatic continuity rather than the disjointed effect of individual numbers. To what extent Berlioz achieved this linear quality will be discussed in a later chapter and holds the key as to

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Julian Rushton, "The Genesis of Berlioz's 'La Damnation de Faust'" Music and Letters, April 1975, p. 131.

why La Damnation de Faust was less than operatic in style. The dramatic legend consists of twenty scenes, divided into four parts.

A perusal of the list of numbers from the "Huit Scènes de Faust" reveals no mention of Faust himself. And this omission was the most significant factor in Berlioz's reworking of the material: the addition of the role of Faust. The characterization of the figure, Faust, was largely carried out by Berlioz through three monologues, all touching upon the theme of nature. Romain Rolland has cited Berlioz's love of nature as the soul of the work: "Et je n'insisterai pas davantage sur cet amour de la Nature, qui . . . est l'âme d'une oeuvre comme la Damnation . . .[23] The first two monologues were composed to texts from the librettist, Gandonnière. The first part of La Damnation de Faust, scene one, opens with Faust, singing alone on the plains of Hungary. He is enjoying the feel of springtime and the solitude offered by nature apart from other human beings. The second part of Berlioz's work, scene four, again features Faust, this time alone in his study. He sings of leaving the smiling countryside: "Sans regrets j'ai quitté les riantes campagnes." The contentment that he first experienced in the bosom of nature has not been sufficient to stem the tide of ennui and melancholy that rushes upon him at nightfall. In this second monologue, Berlioz had to move the material along rapidly in order to include Faust's

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[23] Romain Rolland, Musiciens d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1908), p. 34.

thrust at the suicidal cup, arrested only by the breaking forth of the Easter chorus.

It is the third monologue that will form the basis of the musico-literary analysis of this chapter. Berlioz composed the words and the music for this scene, giving it the title, "Invocation à la Nature"; it therefore offers the most reliable basis for comparing the relationship of Faust to nature as it surfaces in La Damnation de Faust and in Goethe's Faust I. The verbal text for this monologue was the result of Berlioz's initial attempt at libretto writing:

> J'essayai donc, tout en roulant dans ma vielle chaise de poste allemande, de faire les vers destinés à ma musique. Je débutai par l'invocation de Faust à la nature, ne cherchant ni à traduire, ni même à imiter le chef-d'oeuvre, mais à m'en inspirer seulement et à en extraire la substance musicale qui y est contenue.[24]

Berlioz was encouraged enough by the results to continue writing the remaining libretto parts for La Damnation de Faust; and he carried on the practice in his operatic works to follow, namely, Les Troyens, a "grand opéra," and Béatrice et Bénédict, an "opéra-comique."

The text for Faust's aria in scene sixteen of Part Four is as follows:

> Nature immense, impénétrable et fière!
> Toi seule donnes trêve à mon ennui sans fin!
> Sur ton sein tout-puissant je sens moins ma misère,
> Je retrouve ma force et je crois vivre enfin.
> Oui, soufflez ouragans, criez, forêts profondes,
> Croulez rochers, torrents précipitez vos ondes!
> À vos bruits souverains, ma voix aime à s'unir.
> Forêts, rochers, torrents, je vous adore! mondes
> Qui scintillez, vers vous s'élance le désir
> D'un coeur trop vaste et d'une âme altérée

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[24] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 397.

D'un bonheur qui la fuit.[23]

In content, Berlioz has fallen victim to rehashing old themes of French Romantic poetry from the early part of the century. With the synthesis of music and words in mind, French critics do give him credit for the clarity of his versification: "Quant aux vers, ils ont de la clarté, c'est tout ce qu'on en peut dire, et ils ne valent guère que par la musique qui y est adaptée."[24] P. Fortassier, who has been more specific as to the actual rhyme and metre used by Berlioz, is less severe in his criticism: "Il arrive en effet que le vers de Berlioz frôle la poésie, et, surtout si on le compare aux productions des autres librettistes, paraisse d'une essence bien plus relevée."[27] Berlioz never intended to create an autonomous work with his libretto verses: "C'est que, pour le musicien, le texte n'est vraiment qu'un pré-texte."[28] He only sought to achieve that fusion of words and music that is the true goal of opera. This goal was obviously made easier, for instance, in La Damnation de Faust, when words and music were flowing concomitantly from one source:

> Une fois lancé, je fis les vers qui me manquaient au fur et à mesure que me venaient les idées musicales,

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Paul Dukas, Les Écrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique (Paris: Société d'éditions françaises et internationales, 1948), p. 48.

[27] P. Fortassier, "Musique et livret dans les opéras de Berlioz, Gounod, Bizet", Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises, March 1965, p. 44.

[28] Ibid.

> et je composai ma partition avec une facilité que j'ai bien rarement éprouvée pour mes autres oüvrages.[29]

"Invocation à la Nature," scene sixteen of part four is such an example of a "création double."

It was of course part of Romantic thinking to encourage creative activity in more than one of the arts. Such a pursuit emerged naturally in an age that saw closer associations among various arts and artists. Berlioz was known to spend more time with writers than with musicians: ". . . er war in Paris mit den ersten Schriftstellern seiner Zeit bekannt und schätzte im allgemeinen den Umgang mit ihnen mehr als mit den Komponisten."[30] In the case of libretto writing, the question arises as to which of the sister arts, music or literature, came first into existence. Richard Wagner insisted upon the presence of a libretto text before embarking upon the composition of the music. For Berlioz this practice allowed the possible danger of making the music subservient to the words, a fault that he had found with Christoph Willibald Gluck. Berlioz supported Gluck in his reformist style of opera that reacted against the showy and exaggerated display of vocal talent--the mark of Italian opera of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Gluck strove to reintegrate the musical side of opera as an equal part of the dramatic production. Berlioz, first and foremost a musician, wanted to avoid the extreme

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[29] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 397.

[30] Dömling, "Hector Berlioz, La Damnation de Faust", p. 2.

of the music becoming the secondary art.

The "Invocation à la Nature" follows Marguerite's singing of the "Romance" in scene fifteen. Marguerite bemoans the absence of Faust, and it is clear to the audience that her seduction has already taken place. Scene sixteen features Faust alone in the setting of forests and caves, ("Forêts et Cavernes"), borrowed by Berlioz from Goethe's famous scene, "Wald und Höhle." The major difference is that in Goethe's Faust I this contemplative scene occurs in the midst of Faust's courting of Gretchen, as Mephistopheles urges him on to sexual consummation. The two scenes from Berlioz and from Goethe thus serve different dramatic purposes. With Berlioz, this monologue is the last presentation of Faust before he signs his own death warrant in order to save Marguerite. He is then rushed off to hell by Méphistophélès in "La Course à l'Abîme," scene eighteen of the dramatic legend.

The libretto text for Berlioz's "Invocation à la Nature" relates specifically to the first twenty-three lines of Goethe's scene, "Wald und Höhle," which will now be quoted:

> Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles,
> Warum ich bat. Du hast mir nicht umsonst
> Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet.
> Gabst mir die Herrliche Natur zum Königreich,
> Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht
> Kalt staunenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,
> Vergönnest mir in ihre tiefe Brust,
> Wie in den Busen eines Freund's, zu schauen.
> Du führst die Reihe der Lebendigen
> Vor mir vorbei, und lehrst mich meine Brüder
> Im stillen Busch, in Luft und Wasser kennen.
> Und wenn der Sturm im Walde braust und knarrt,

Die Riesenfichte, stürzend, Nachbaräste
Und Nachbarstämme, quetschend, niederstreift,
Und ihrem Fall dumpf hohl der Hügel donnert;
Dann führst du mich zur sichern Höhle, zeigst
Mich dann mir selbst, und meiner eignen Brust
Geheime tiefe Wunder öffnen sich.
Und steigt vor meinem Blick der reine Mond
Besänftigend herüber; schweben mir
Von Felsenwänden, aus dem feuchten Busch,
Der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten auf,
Und lindern der Betrachtung strenge Lust.[31]

As a starting point for comparing these two texts, (Berlioz's was quoted above), it is useful to recall Berlioz's own explanation in his Mémoires (also quoted above): he had no intention of translating or of imitating Goethe's masterpiece, but was rather seeking to extract the musical substance from it. Herbert Lindenberger claims in his book on opera that deviation from an original text can encourage an audience to recognize the autonomy of an operatic work.[32] Berlioz did not mention whether he had Nerval's translation on hand at this point, and if so, what edition he was using. What emerges from his text, however, is a very pronounced image of Faust's relationship with nature, which must be viewed in the light of the philosophy of nature emerging from "Wald und Höhle."

A reader of the two texts is immediately struck by the difference in address. Berlioz's Faust directs himself to nature with the familiar second-person form of the French language, ("Toi seule . . .", etc.). In Goethe's Faust, the

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[31] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust I, Vol. 3 of Goethes Werke (München : C. H. Beck, 1981), pp. 103-104.

[32] Herbert Lindenberger, Opera: The Extravagant Art (Ithaca: Cornell, 1984), p. 43.

familiar form of address, ("du"), is used by Faust to call upon the exalted spirit or "Erhabner Geist." To this exalted spirit, Goethe's Faust gives recognition for granting him everything he has asked for at the beginning of his quest. Included in this "everything" is the power to appreciate nature: "Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich, /Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen." As well, he has gained deeper understanding of other living beings. He continues with the influence that the past ("Der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten") brings to bear in easing his burden, and finally recognizes his relationship with Mephistopheles as belonging to the realm of superhuman knowledge gained. In short, what emerges from Goethe's lines is the image of a universal cosmos over which the exalted spirit reigns, and in which man alongside nature has a part to play. With Berlioz, it is the image of sublime nature that is being exalted, with such adjectives as "immense, impénétrable et fière."

The relationship between Berlioz's Faust and nature thus develops along different lines. With Berlioz's Faust, only nature is capable of providing relief from his ennui and misery, and of restoring his will to live. In other words, it is nature that is omnipotent ("Sur ton sein tout-puissant"), in contrast to the weak, suffering individual. Goethe's Faust has actively sought an understanding of the secrets of creation and, when confronted with the might of nature, is able to deal with it without becoming overwhelmed. The mid-section of both

passages presents the classic picture of the forest in its dark, primeval strength: storms growling, giant pine trees crashing headlong. Berlioz added the mention of rocks and torrents. In Goethe's Faust, it is the Exalted Spirit that bears Faust away from this menacing side of nature to the shelter of a cave ("die Höhle"), thus giving expression to the two sides of nature, threat and salvation as symbolized by the title of this scene, "Wald und Höhle." Parallel to having seen into the depths of nature ("in ihre tiefe Brust . . . zu schauen"), Faust is now granted insight into his own soul, (". . . und meiner eignen Brust / Geheime tiefe Wunder öffnen sich"). Through Faust, Goethe portrays the individual in harmony with nature yet independent of it.

In contrast, the Faust of Berlioz does not withdraw from the forces of nature to find himself, but rather seeks there to lose himself. Compared to Goethe's third-person narration of the elements in nature, Berlioz had Faust address them directly: ". . . soufflez, ouragans, / Criez, forêts profondes!", etc. He then expresses his desire for union with these elemental forces: "À vos bruits souverains ma voix aime à s'unir." It is the Romantic deliverance of self for which he strives, rather than for an understanding of man's place within the cosmos.

After this giddy plunge at the might and majesty of nature, Faust falls back to the awareness of his own inadequacy. Berlioz concluded his invocation with a hint of the Zeluco theme: ". . . une âme altérée / D'un bonheur qui

la fuit." Faust is here not ready to appreciate the happiness offered by the natural order of things. One is reminded of early Romantic writers such as Chateaubriand who laments the fate of the lonely, suffering hero in René. The Romantic individual, alienated from society, turns to nature for solace, only to find that the alienation resides within himself and cannot be reconciled.

Within these eleven lines of text, Berlioz moved from the extremes of ennui to religious enthusiasm for nature and back to hopeless longing for happiness. Typical traits of a Byronic hero come to mind: ". . . le Faust berliozien s'écarte de la conception goethéenne pour emprunter plusieurs traits à Byron: ennui, démesure, ivresse luciférienne."[33] It is this tendency towards excess and towards the irrational that sets Berlioz off so markedly as a product of Romanticism. Dr. Simon calls his invocation to nature "eine schwärmerische Hingabe an die Natur."[34]

Most significant for understanding Berlioz's characterization of Faust is the goal expressed for the individual, Faust: the pursuit of happiness. It is immediately obvious why Berlioz has been accused of simplifying the role of Faust in his dramatic legend. What of the metaphysical pondering of Goethe's Faust? Even in this brief excerpt from "Wald und Höhle," one is reminded in

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[33] Marcel Schneider, "Hector Berlioz. La Damnation de Faust," (programme notes for Deutsche Grammaphon recording), p. 7.

[34] Simon, Faust in der Musik, p. 24.

the opening words, "Erhabner Geist," of Faust's whole quest to aspire to the knowledge of the supernatural powers, Berlioz concluded with the image of "âme altérée" as compared to Goethe's "der Betrachtung strenge Lust." The difference in perspective is clear: where Berlioz projected the image of an insatiable soul, Goethe was dealing with an insatiable mind and soul and body.

In part, Berlioz's reduction of the role of Faust is necessitated by the need of any libretto to condense the original material. As well, there is a suggestion of the early reception of Goethe's work by the French, who had little taste for the depths of German symbolism and metaphysics. Paul Lasserre speaks of this difference in his study of Faust in France: "En général, le symbolisme nous semble étrange, à nous Français."[33] Berlioz's decision to damn his hero, as seen even in the choice of title, "La Damnation de Faust," is also not such a complicated matter: it is not Goethe's Faust in all his complexity that is being damned, but rather the figure as perceived by Berlioz.

The damning of Faust is a thought process that was set in motion with the original reception of Faust I by Mme de Staël. In her book, De l'Allemagne, she draws attention to the weaknesses of Goethe's Faust:

> Faust rassemble dans son caractère toutes les faiblesses de l'humanité: désir de savoir et fatique du travail; besoin du succès, satiété du plaisir. C'est un parfait modèle de l'être changeant et mobile, dont les sentiments sont plus éphémères

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[33] Pierre Lasserre, Faust en France et autres études (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, Éditeurs, 1929), p. 25.

> encore que la courte vie dont il se plaint. Faust a plus d'ambition que de force; . . .[34]

This judgement also follows from the concentration of the French on Faust I. In the last line quoted above from Mme de Staël, we see that the titanism of Goethe's Faust is not appreciated as an end in itself. And in Berlioz's libretto text for "Invocation à la Nature," it is the suffering of Faust that is depicted but not his striving for superhuman knowledge. This is as far as the words alone can take us. It is now necessary to consult the music composed by Berlioz in order to complete our conception of his "substance musicale" for this scene.

The music for Faust's monologue, "Invocation à la Nature," was composed by Berlioz in the style of a song through-composed, or to use the German term, "durchkomponiert." This type of song structure implies a continually changing melodic line that develops according to the meaning of the words being expressed--without the repetition of whole sections. The early Romantic composers particularly favoured this form of solo vocal music. The earlier strophic type of song structure offers a melody that is repeated for each verse, whatever the message of the words. There is also the possible repetition of words and music in a refrain. With this type of composition, there can be little closeness between the words and the music, and the beauty of such songs depends largely upon the melodic line

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[34] Madame de Staël, De l'Allemagne, Vol. 2 of Oeuvres complètes (Genève : Slatkine Reprints, 1967), p. 118.

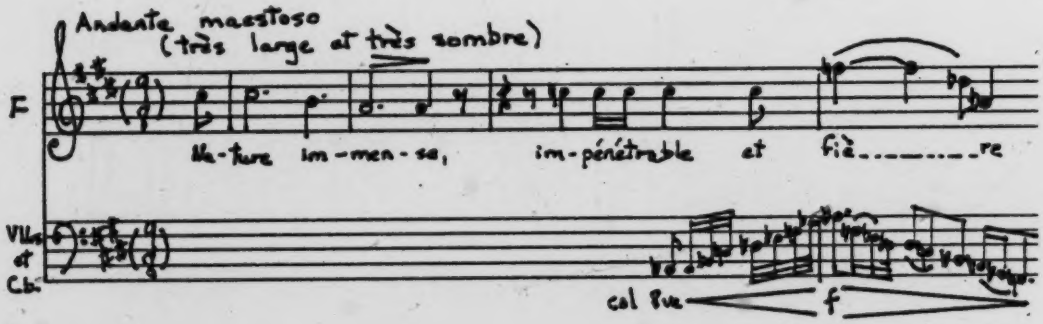
and the anticipated repetition of it. With Romantic music, the earlier emphasis on external form was replaced by the freeing and extending of forms in order to allow a more personal outpouring of human sentiment. Influenced by the movement to bring the arts closer together, the Romantic composers saw the "durchkomponiert" type of song as a channel for increasing the expressive powers of music.

Berlioz began the "Invocation à la Nature" with an eight-bar orchestral passage that sets the forest scene for the whole aria to follow. The opening tonic chord of C sharp minor is sounded by the flutes, English horn, trombones and strings. The predominating impression, however, is of the outer extremes of pitch established by the flutes playing a high C sharp and the trombones, cellos and double basses on a low C sharp. The contrabass sounds an octave lower than written which emphasizes the lower extreme. This dichotomy of sound portrays a vastness that is enhanced by the slow, majestic tempo, "Andante maestoso," and by the subdued dynamics of double piano, (pp). Such sustained tones are usually a symbol of the constancy of nature portrayed in pastorales. The 9/8 metre is often related to nature-descriptive music; but here Berlioz transformed the normally peaceful pastorale into something powerful and threatening. This characterization of nature as awe-inspiring and somewhat menacing contrasts with the portrayal of nature in the first two arias of Faust. In the opening number of <u>La Damnation de Faust</u>, Faust sings

optimistically of the soothing effect of springtime. The accompaniment features the upper strings which--though conveying a hint of questioning--maintain a relatively light-hearted atmosphere.

After the opening chord of scene sixteen, a drum intonation is heard from the timpani which helps establish the rhythm of the compound triple time signature, (9/8). These drum sounds also inject a feeling of pulsation or vitality into the image of nature being created. This effect is enhanced by the change of dynamic level from pp to mf in the two bars preceding the vocal entry.

Into this musical setting of a vast, awe-inspriring forest, the tenor, Faust, enters with the words, "Nature immense," that acts as a title for the aria to follow:[37]



There now begins a section of melody whose main function is the illustration of various key words. "Nature immense" receives emphasis through the slow tempo of dotted half and quarter notes, in support of the composer's indication on

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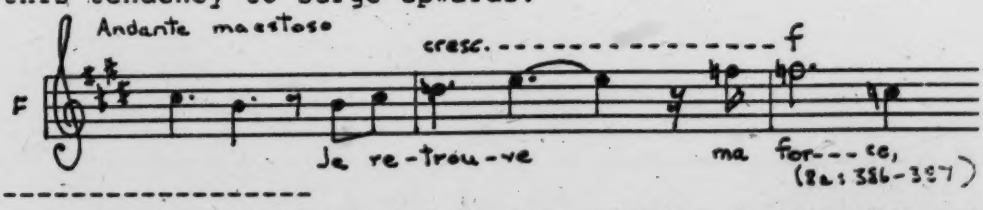
[37] H. Berlioz, La Damnation de Faust, ed. J. Rushton (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1979), Vol. 8a, p. 384. Subsequent quotations from the score will be indicated by page number only.

the score, "très large et très sombre." This subdued feeling is broken, however, by the shorter note values for the word "impénétrable" which conveys a feeling of momentum, as voice and lower strings rise for the expression of the word, "fière." Emphasis is here achieved through the high pitch of an F natural and the accompanying increase in volume. The cello and double bass parts feature the first of several ascending and descending scale passages that symbolize the raging of the elements throughout the scene. The lower strings are also responsible for continuing the dichotomy of pitch, established at the opening of the scene. The cello and double bass parts seem to react against the high range of the tenor role, Faust, and give the effect of the rumbling, demonic forces of nature. Typical for Berlioz, four bassoons are added to the rushing scale which increases in volume from forte to a sforzando. The shift from C sharp minor to D flat major is also significant in a portrayal of the dynamism to be found in nature since major keys convey a more outgoing mood. In addition, D flat major is a particularly rich--even majestic--key.[38]

As Faust continues to sing of the comfort he derives from nature, the shape of the melodic line persists with this tendency to surge upwards:



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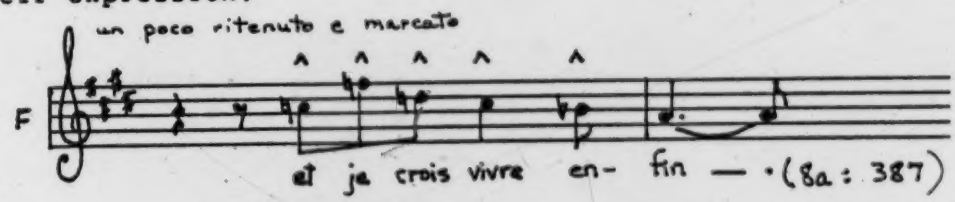
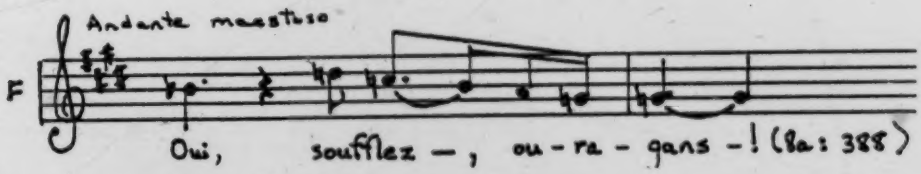
[38] Rita Steblin, Key Characteristics in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1981), p. 266.

Faust then concludes this opening section of the aria with the statement "et je crois vivre enfin." The words are sung to accented notes, an obvious means of lending emphasis to their expression:



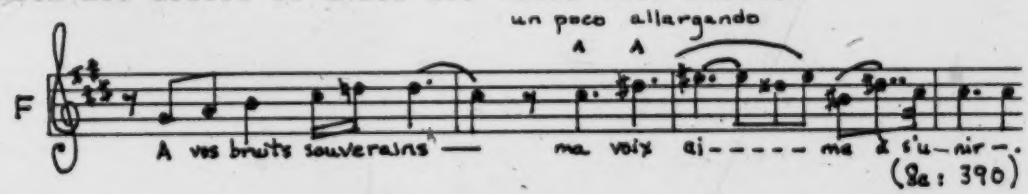
The orchestra accompanies this line of verse with accented chords in the same basic rhythm as the voice part. There is a strong sense of finality on the word "enfin," accompanied by a traditional cadence of dominant to tonic in the major key of F. This brief respite in the major key offers a moment of solidarity that is missing where the music constantly strives upwards with unusual key shifts. This upward movement discourages the development of normal key progressions which would revolve about close tonic relationships.

The music now changes somewhat in character as it corresponds to the lines of Faust from the libretto, in which he addresses the elements of nature directly:



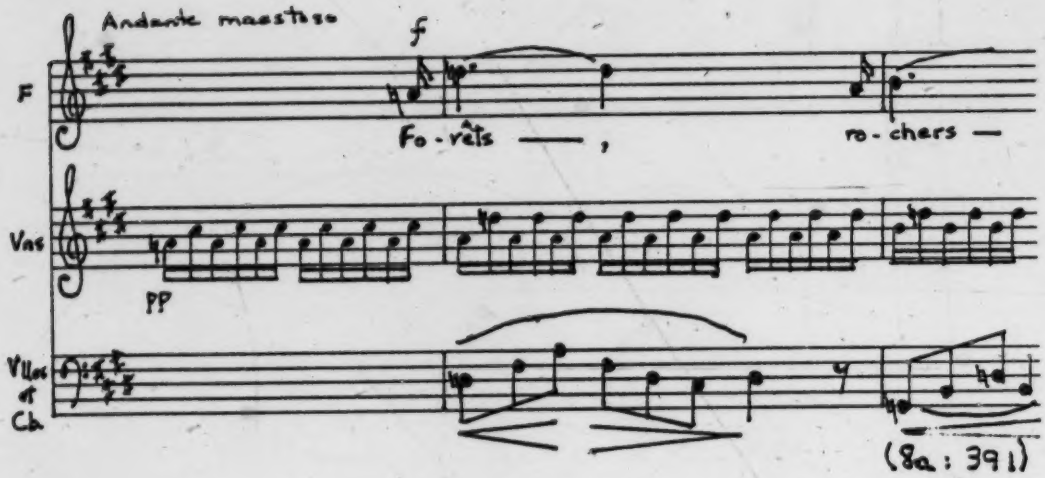
This phrase is now repeated sequentially three times, as the opening note of the phrase rises chromatically from a B flat, to a B natural, to an C natural and finally to a C

sharp. Such sequential treatment naturally builds tension. But also a different relationship between voice and orchestra is being established in this section. The above phrase gives evidence of a less smooth melodic line, the jerkier rhythmic pattern lending a more aggressive edge to Faust's singing. Each phrase is accompanied by upper string tremolos and punctuated by the rapid scale passage in the lower strings, that rises to a sforzando sound before falling back to piano. As this exchange between voice and instruments occurs four times with ever mounting tension, it suggests Faust struggling with the elements, and concludes with his desire to unite his voice with theirs:

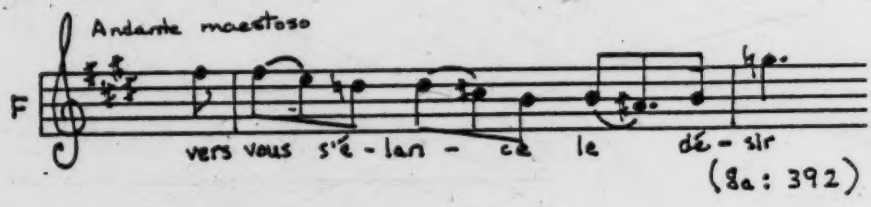


Again the music features a cadential close from the dominant G sharp major chord to the key of C sharp major, established here. The use of the major key supports the idea of union expressed by Faust and provides for a sense of released tension. Also, on the second syllable of "s'u-nir," the cellos, basses and bassoons give out a rushing scale starting on the downbeat which as well contributes to the sense of stability.

Faust continues to address the elements with the interjections "Forêts" and "rochers"; but he is accompanied here by a more subdued, repeating broken-chord figure in the strings:



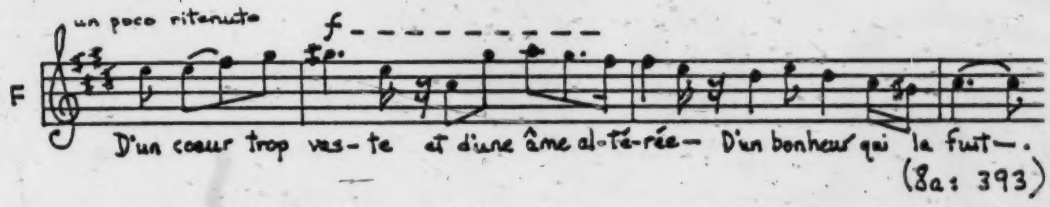
The music builds towards Faust's final expression of insatiable yearning. The accompaniment remains in the background, as the human voice strains beyond its limits. Faust sings the words, "Mondes scintillez," on the high note of F natural before concluding on F sharp. The next line of verse and music conveys an increased expressiveness through the use of a smoother, more conjunct melody that moves up to a G natural:



The more independent character of the voice part at this point in the aria seems to convey the notion that Faust is more in control here and perhaps able to take a more objective look at himself. The more connected and forceful melodic line stands out in contrast to his earlier desperate, fragmentary bursts of melody that represented his efforts to unite with the elemental forces of nature. This

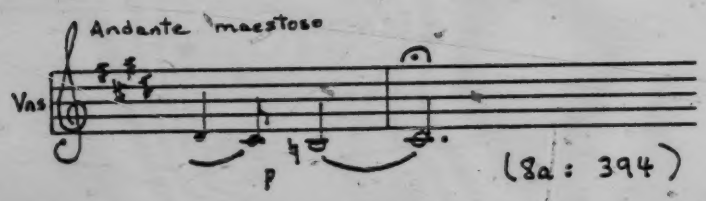
recalls the basic duality of the Romantic soul that tries unsuccessfully to reconcile its subjective and objective tendencies.

In Faust's final line of the monologue, the tenor moves from G sharp to the ultimate pitch for this aria of a high A:



It is in this striving ever upwards that Berlioz brought an additional dimension to the image created by the libretto words alone. Through the medium of musical sounds he gave expression to the infinite striving of Goethe's Faust after "Vollkommenes" or completeness.

As Faust sings his final C sharp, the string section of the orchestra takes over with a dénouement of seven bars that leads to the closing diminuendo. This conclusion to the scene is very linear and melodic in character: the four string parts play, in unison, a gently rising melody based upon broken chords, that has the effect of a narrative statement. The final cadence with a B natural moving to a C sharp is very important in expressing a sense of collapse: the lowered seventh--coming right after the B sharp to C sharp movement--is very strange and has the powerful effect of an unanswered question:



Faust has been left suspended somewhere between fulfilment and inadequacy--the world of nature lives on as a framework for human existence.

The "durchkomponiert" form of composition in this aria allowed Berlioz the greatest freedom in expressing the insatiable longing of this soul, Faust. Some features, such as the 9/8 metre, would hint at a typical pastoral setting; but in fact Berlioz coloured the scene with such dark and sombre orchestral effects that nature becomes here overpowering and even threatening. The overall movement of the melodic line conveys an upward striving that effectively expresses the Romantic surging after irrational limits. The result is an exceptionally close union of text and music.

CHAPTER 4

The Expression of Diabolical Humour

Berlioz's fascination with the figure of Mephistopheles was evident in his original work, the "Huit Scènes de Faust" of 1828 and 1829. Two of Méphistophélès' major solo numbers to appear in La Damnation de Faust date from this earlier work: "La Chanson de Méphistophélès" and "Sérénade de Méphistophélès." The first one is included in La Damnation de Faust in scene six, Part Two, and the second one, in scene twelve of Part Three. Along with the necessary recitative passages, a third aria, "Air de Méphistophélès," was added by Berlioz in composing scene seven of the dramatic legend. This aria was part of Berlioz's scheme to enlarge the original "Concert des Sylphes"; he devised a scene of enchantment in which Faust would first see Marguerite in a dream. As mentioned in the previous chapter, not one of the original eight scenes dealt directly with the role of Faust.

This omission is indicative of the early French reception of Goethe's Faust, Part One: their attention was focussed upon the figure of the devil. Mme de Staël was instrumental in setting this train of interpretation into motion with her analysis of the work in De l'Allemagne of 1810. She made Mephistopheles into the hero of Goethe's

drama:

> Le diable est le héros de cette pièce; l'auteur ne l'a point conçu comme un fantôme hideux, tel qu'on a coutume de le représenter aux enfants; il en a fait, si l'on peut s'exprimer ainsi, le méchant par excellence . . . Goethe a voulu montrer dans ce personnage, réel et fantastique tout à la fois, la plus amère plaisanterie que le dédain puisse inspirer, et néanmoins une audace de gaieté qui amuse. Il y a dans les discours de Méphistophélès une ironie infernale, qui porte sur la création tout entière, et juge l'univers comme un mauvais livre dont le diable se fait le censeur.[1]

Mme de Staël was most struck by the persistent expression of infernal irony throughout the play which, to her way of thinking, causes the figure of Mephistopheles to predominate. She referred to him as a civilized devil ("un diable civilisé") and pointed out the unusual significance that Goethe awarded the diabolical. In so doing, she concentrated upon the figure of the devil in its own right, rather than upon its philosophical connection with Goethe's concept of cosmic creation being enacted in Faust. Mephistopheles is in fact an emissary of the Erdgeist and represents the necessary negative polarity of a dialectic process.

Max Milner, in his study of the devil in French literature, speaks of the unbelievable attraction for the devil figure once it is separated out from the religious sphere: "Mais une fois annexée au domaine de l'imaginaire, la représentation du diable va exercer une emprise et une séduction qu'elle ne pouvait pas avoir lorsqu'elle était l'objet d'une croyance et d'une crainte véritablement

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[1] Madame de Staël, De l'Allemagne, p. 117.

religieuses."[2] It was such an attraction that was felt by Eugène Delacroix when he was inspired in 1826 and 1827 to create a series of seventeen lithographs on the subject of Goethe's Faust, Part One. Delacroix emphasized the Gothic atmosphere emanating from the drama and succeeded in creating an impressive graphic portrayal of the diabolical.[3] According to Milner, Delacroix established the classic image of Mephisto with his lithograph of 1828: "On peut dire qu'à partir de 1828, le type physique de Mephisto est fixé pour l'éternité."[4]

It is interesting to note that Goethe himself approved of Delacroix's work, when he saw some copies of it in 1826. Talking to Johann Peter Eckermann in 1826, Goethe had before him the sixteenth lithograph, (cf. the enclosed illustration), depicting the nocturnal horse ride of Faust and Mephistopheles. Both Eckermann and Goethe were fascinated by Delacroix's choice of a phosphorescent colour for Mephisto's horse in place of Goethe's description of black for both steeds. The notion of phosphorescence emphasizes the other-worldliness of the figure. He commented to Eckermann, "Da muss man doch gestehen, . . . dass man es

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[2] Max Milner, Le Diable dans la littérature française de Cazotte à Baudelaire 1772-1861 (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1960) 1:205.

[3] Gary Schmidgall in his work, Literature as Opera (New York: Oxford, 1977), p. 7, draws a parallel between Berlioz and Delacroix for "their liberation of expressive colouring."

[4] Ibid., p. 458.

sich selbst nicht so vollkommen gedacht hat."[5] And both agreed that Delacroix's lithographs would aid in an understanding of Goethe's drama.

Yet, in the area of music, Goethe proved to be much more conservative. I have mentioned in the previous chapter how he relied upon the judgment of Zelter concerning Berlioz's composition, "Huit Scènes de Faust." His own ideas on the nature of a Faust composition were expressed in a conversation with Eckermann in February of 1829:

> Das Abstossende, Widerwärtige, Furchtbare, was sie stellenweise enthalten müsste, ist der Zeit zuwider. Die Musik müsste im Charakter des Don Juan sein; Mozart hätte den Faust komponieren müssen. Meyerbeer wäre vielleicht dazu fähig, . . .[6]

With this statement Goethe showed his distance to matters of musical judgment, in that he mentioned Mozart and Meyerbeer in the same breath. It is known that Goethe's musical taste in his final years did not extend beyond listening to Haydn and Mozart. When even Beethoven did not find an audience with him, it is small wonder that he was not ready to appreciate the style of Berlioz. Moreover, it was Berlioz--the great orchestral innovator of French romantic music--who was the most apt candidate for expressing musically the repellent, the offensive and the frightful of the Faust legend.[7] These characteristics were involved in

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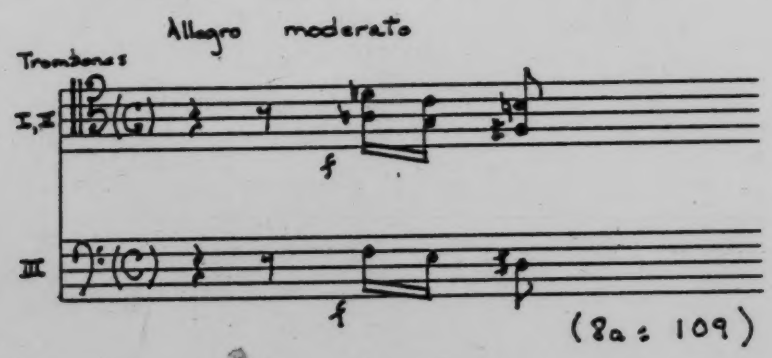
[5] Johann Peter Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976), p. 184.

[6] Ibid., p. 313.

[7] Franz liszt, with his pianistic virtuosity and

his portrayal of the figure, Mephistopheles. The question is how readily his music expresses the diabolical quality of Mephistopheles' humour.

In La Damnation de Faust, Méphistophélès first appears in scene five of Part Two, immediately after the singing of the Easter chorus. His entrance is announced by a menacing blast from the three trombones, two tenor and one bass:



The sound of the trombone, with such unusual harmony as the three chromatically descending major triads shown above, becomes closely associated with the figure of Méphistophélès in La Damnation de Faust. And it was at Berlioz's insistence that the part was scored for one bass trombone, and not just for three tenor. Berlioz discussed the rarity of the bass trombone among Parisian players in his Treatise on Orchestration; its size caused more fatigue in executing sounds than with the smaller trombones. But his comment on its tone justifies its inclusion in this work: "Le son du Trombone Basse est majestueux, formidable et

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'(cont'd) radical harmony, was also successful in finding a means of musical expression for these diabolical qualities.

terrible. . ."[8] These were the very qualities Mozart was seeking to convey when he used trombones in the final scene of Don Giovanni: the trombone sound is associated with the statue of the Commendatore coming to life and with Don Giovanni meeting his doom.[9]

After the startling, disquieting signal from the trombones, Méphistophélès comments in recitative on the reawakening of Faust's religious fervour during the Easter hymn:

> Ô pure émotion! Enfant du saint parvis!
> Je t'admire, docteur! Les pieuses volées
> De ces cloches d'argent
> Ont charmé grandement
> Tes oreilles troublées!
>
> (pp. 109-110)

The accompaniment is supplied by the upper strings--double-stopped, tremolo, ponticello, strettissimo and punctuated by trombones! The message is strongly ironic; and Méphistophélès quickly establishes himself in the traditional role of the devil as a sardonic critic, possessing superhuman knowledge though not in league with God and the angels. From this vantage point he is able to judge the aspirations of a mortal such as Faust and is quick to offer him more tempting alternatives for living. This role of critic and temptor is carried over from Goethe's

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[8] Hector Berlioz, Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration, new ed. (Paris: Henry Lemoine & Cie, 1925), p. 200.

[9] Such symbolic use of the trombone had shown up previously in its association with church music. It was only in the nineteenth century that the trombone was incorporated into the symphony.

Faust. What is different with Berlioz is the tremendous compression of all metaphysical discussion that takes place in Goethe's drama. According to Schmidgall, "a librettist . . . will naturally gravitate away from passages of discursive complexity and toward those that issue in psychological or physical action."[10] With Méphistophélès' second passage of recitative, which consists of four lines, he makes his offer to Faust of happiness and pleasure. Faust very quickly consents: "J'y consens." And they are off to Auerbach's cellar for the chorus of drinkers in scene six.

In this way, the clever wittiness of Goethe's Mephistopheles does not find expression in Berlioz's work. The brief passages of recitative communicate his sarcastic stance. But the metaphysical wagering and bating that Goethe staged between Faust and the devil is too prolonged for operatic performance. The verbal wit of high comedy does not play a central role in La Damnation de Faust, and correspondingly, Berlioz's devil figure loses some of the appeal that was featured in Goethe's work. The comic relativism, linked to God and to satirizing Mephistopheles' own satanic connections, is missing in Berlioz's musical translation.

In the area of low comedy, Goethe presented the scene in the witches' kitchen with its vulgar innuendos, in order to create a parody on such dabbling in the black arts. Musically, this low level of comedy is rendered by the style

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[10] Schmidgall, Literature as Opera, p. 15.

of Brander's Song in scene six of La Damnation de Faust. The setting is typical for musical comedy: he is one of the drinkers in Auerbach's cellar and is obviously suffering under the influence of alcohol. He sings of a rat by making a pun on the expression, "in heat" ("l'amour au corps")[11] --from love and from sitting on a stove!--thus affording the primal comic appeal to baseness. This type of humour lends itself to musical expression. Brander's song features three verses, each one ending with the phrase, "l'amour au corps!" on the high bass note D. This phrase is then repeated by the male chorus, lending a mock serious choral backing to Brander's exaggerated--but unsuccessful--attempt to enunciate and sing in tune the tale of the rat.

Mme de Staël speaks of the scene in the witches' kitchen as a parody on the scene in Macbeth: "On peut considérer cette scène, à quelques égards, comme la parodie des Sorcières de Macbeth."[12] This scene is missing in Berlioz's transformation of the Faust material; but we do find the spirit of parody in the famous fugue that he composed for this drinking scene, thus creating a parallel parody of form though not of subject matter. Berlioz's manipulation of the fugue form will be analysed later in this thesis in connection with the topic of Romantic irony in the opéra-comique, Béatrice et Bénédict. Primarily, Berlioz felt the fugue had been abused and exhausted as a

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[11] The more usual French colloquial expression is "le diable au corps."

[12] Madame de Staël, De l'Allemagne, p. 119.

musical form.'[13] Of special importance in a discussion of Méphistophélès is the way Berlioz elevated his role here from general mentor to actual musical critic. Before the singing of the fugue in scene six, Méphistophélès turns to Faust and sings in a low voice:

> Écoute bien ceci: nous allons voir, docteur,
> La bestialité dans toute sa candeur.
> (p. 144)

The fugue, sung by a male chorus, follows. Méphistophélès sarcastically remarks on its pious quality; in answer, he presents his song about the flea. The chorus first questions the identity of this mocking critic and very specifically points out his red hair. This physical detail, linking the devil with red hair, is found in folklore. But it is also interesting to note that Berlioz himself apparently had an unruly mop of reddish hair. (In his Mémoires, he referred to his own coiffure as ". . . une forêt de longs cheveux roux.")[14] Thus, Berlioz hinted at a connection between himself and the devil, Méphistophélès: they both seek to make fun of a very established musical form, the fugue.

By allowing Méphistophélès to act as his mouthpiece, Berlioz gave an added dimension to the role of the devil. This connection also imparts a certain worldliness to the figure of the devil at this point; his commentary on the fugue--an issue pertinent to Berlioz's own musical

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[13] The theme of revitalizing the fugue form through parody and irony is taken up by Thomas Mann in his story of Adrian Leverkühn, Doktor Faustus.

[14] Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 107.

career--embodies the spirit of topical allusions that is present in Goethe's dialogue between Faust and Mephistopheles. Max Milner credits Berlioz with giving Mephistopheles an inward dimension: ". . . le jeune compositeur donne au personnage de Méphistophélès une dimension intérieure, que ses contemporains sont loin de soupçonner, . . ."[18] At this stage, Berlioz succeeded in depicting the devil as an independent character with human traits of personality.

After the presentation of the fugue in Auerbach's cellar, Méphistophélès and Faust move off to the banks of the river Elbe, where Faust beholds Marguerite in a dream. The chief characteristic of Méphistophélès' role becomes its seductive quality. Musically, this quality is portrayed by a very slight manipulation of the anticipated musical form. Méphistophélès sings an aria at the beginning of scene seven in order to lull Faust asleep: he is accompanied, however, by trombones. In addition, his aria features some unusual jumps of a fifth and also of an octave which convey a less than soothing effect. To be sure, it is not a typical lullaby. Faust is rather the victim of enchantment, as the gnomes and sylphs take over and conjure up for him a magical vision of Marguerite. In scene twelve, the will-o-the-wisps, who have just been commandeered by Méphistophélès, perform a minuet. Berlioz again employed musical parody as he introduced very unexpected and exaggerated crescendos into

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[18] Milner, Le Diable dans la littérature française, 1:457.

the style of the minuet--which would normally feature a graceful and very smoothly flowing melody. It is obviously the will-o-the-wisps, portrayed by the piccolos, who are flitting about, in parody of the baroque ladies and gentlemen with their ponderous costumes and powdered wigs.

The will-o-the-wisps accompany Méphistophélès as he sings his famous "Sérénade." Instead of a sentimental line of melody, dedicated to the ideal of love, Méphistophélès displays a taunting, jerky style of singing that erupts frequently into the outburst of "Ha!" He refers to a girl named Louison but he is really alluding to Marguerite and her pending disaster as she succombs to Faust's avowal of love. He reduces the ideal of love to its physical dimensions, and the serenade becomes a bawdy ballad.

Berlioz, however, was preparing the final outcome of the dramatic legend through the intervention of these magical touches. The apotheosis of Marguerite, which occurs in the final scene, is based upon her blamelessness in the face of the evil powers of Méphistophélès and his supernatural adherents. This interpretation again reflects the early French reception of Goethe's work: "Il faut bien l'avouer, l'épisode de Gretchen, plus encore que le fantastique de Faust et que l'ironie absolue du personnage de Méphistophélès, a contribué à cacher au gros du public français la signification profonde du drama de Goethe. . ."[14] Following in the footsteps of Mme de Staël,

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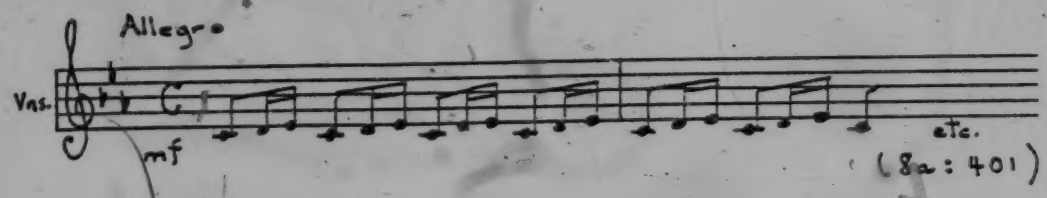
[14] Fernand Beldensperger, Goethe en France, p. 138.

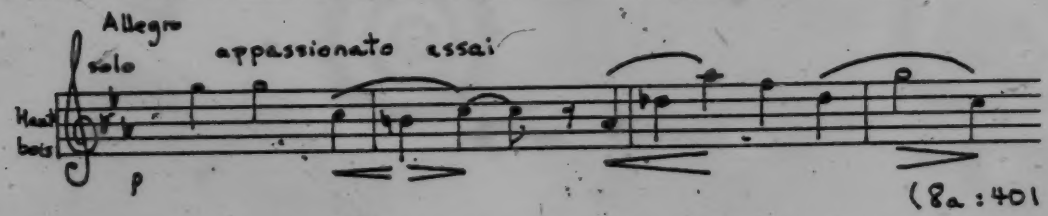
Berlioz felt the greater compassion for Marguerite because of her lowly and simple condition: thus, he clearly allowed her public forgiveness at the conclusion of the dramatic legend. Musically, he left a more complete portrayal of her situation to Charles Gounod. Berlioz himself was drawn to the musical possibilities of presenting Faust's damnation. As scene seventeen opens, Méphistophélès informs Faust of Marguerite's incarceration for the murder of her mother. In a departure from Goethe, Berlioz referred to Marguerite's repeated use of the drug to make her mother sleep more soundly. Méphistophélès extorts from Faust his signature, signifying Faust's demise in payment for saving Marguerite. The way in which the bargain is struck has strong moralistic overtones and sets the scene for Faust's damnation to follow. His act of mercy towards Marguerite does not redeem him. The whole concept of the pact differs with Berlioz. His Faust signs his life away because of the guilt and the ensuing responsibility he feels in connection with Marguerite. According to Goethe, the pact with the devil represents Faust's challenging of Mephistopheles in the form of a wager: that even the devil will not bring him to a static enjoyment of life.

The famous ride to the abyss, "La Course à l'abîme," constitutes scene eighteen of La Damnation de Faust and translates musically the fore-mentioned lithograph of Eugène Delacroix. Berlioz followed Goethe and not Delacroix however, with the libretto indication, "Faust et

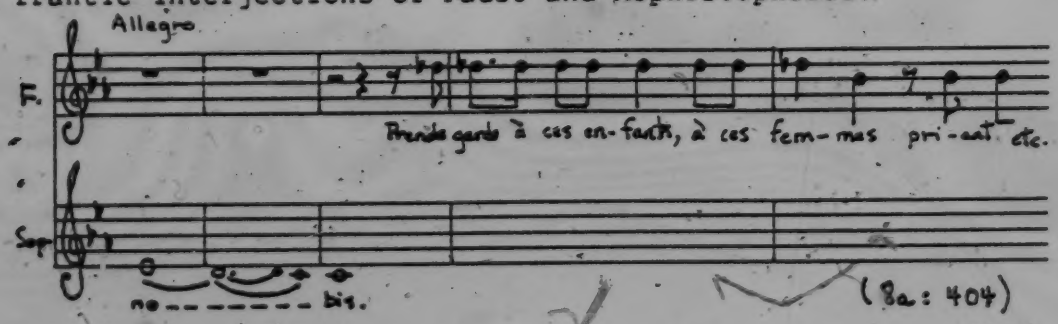
Méphistophélès galopant sur deux chevaux noirs" (p. 401). The music for scene eighteen begins with a stirring rhythmic figure in the violins, which represents the galloping hooves of the two black horses:



This violin accompaniment is maintained almost constantly throughout the number, and in the second half, is fortified by the other upper string sections. Against this, the oboe enters with a haunting melody, marked appassionato assai:

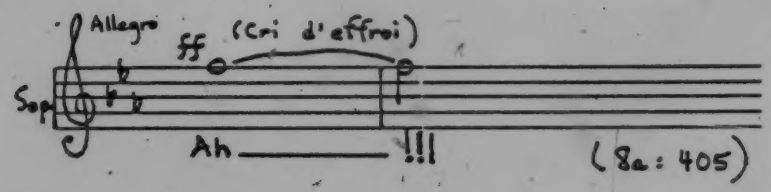


This oboe solo, recalling Marguerite and her fate, drives Faust on to free her from prison, As he and Méphistophélès rush along, they pass a group of peasants, kneeling in prayer at a wayside cross. Berlioz works in their singing of the litany, "Sancta Maria," in contrapuntal fashion with the frantic interjections of Faust and Méphistophélès:

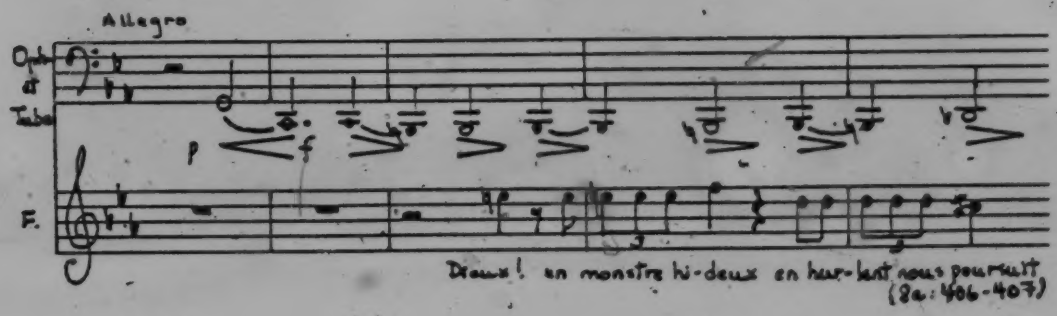


Faust cautions Méphistophélès to be careful of the women and children. With utter coldness and total lack of humanity he replies: "Eh! qu'importe! en avant!" Méphistophélès here has lost all pretense of a human personality. He becomes increasingly the inhuman, symbolic figure of hell, totally consequential in his treatment of Faust.

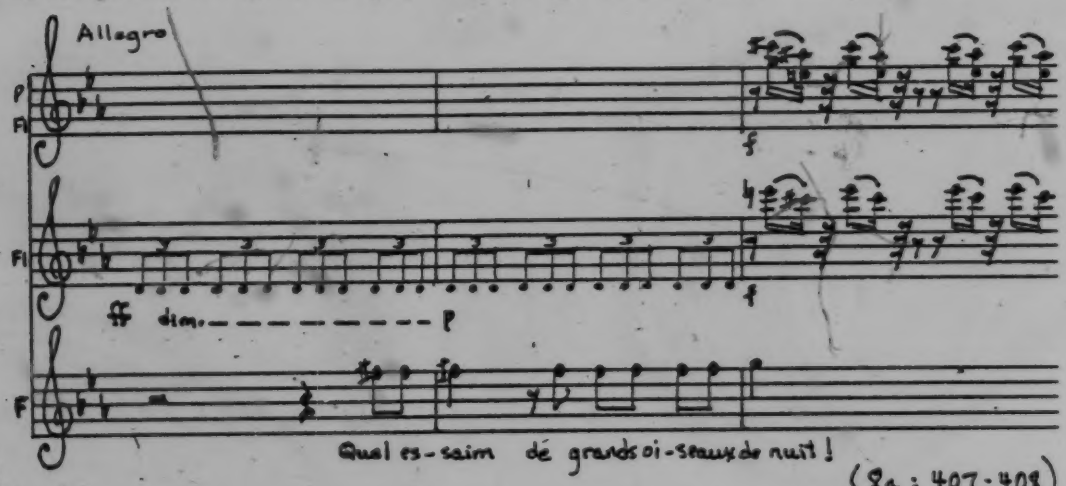
The reaction of the praying women and children to Méphistophélès and Faust galopping past is a scream of terror:



The sound of this "Ah!" which interrupts their singing of "Sancta" and is supported by a double forte G flat ninth chord from the strings, startles and chills the listener. The peasants scatter in terror, and the nightmarish quality of the scene is intensified. Berlioz introduced the extremely low and threatening sounds of the ophicleide and the tuba, in a tone painting of the monsters that Faust now perceives in hallucinatory fashion:



Méphistophélès tells Faust that he is dreaming. Berlioz continued the portrayal of Faust's inner consciousness by having him sing of huge, swarming, shrieking night birds:



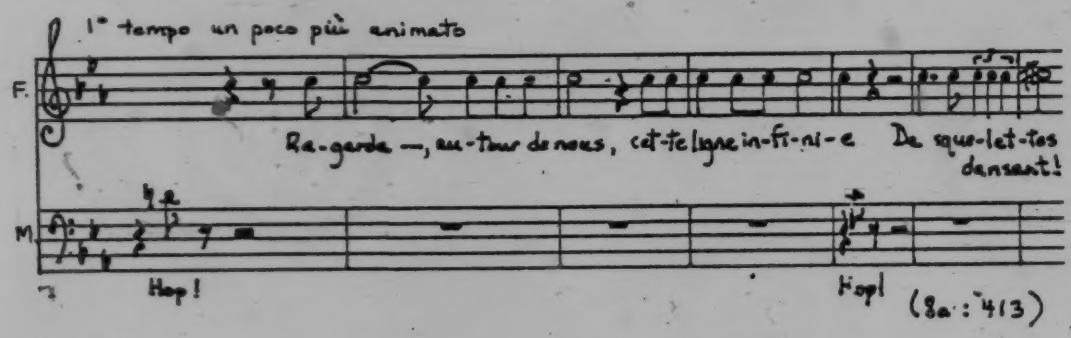
(Sa : 407-408)

Musically, these birds are depicted by the piercing sounds of repeating chordal drops such as shown in the above example of the piccolo part. In this atmosphere of the fantastic, one sees the Romantic striving to reveal human psychology through the feelings expressed in abnormal states: Faust feels pursued by these demonic creatures in the company of a satanic guide who can only offer him damnation.

Méphistophélès first teases Faust with the possibility of turning back. The whole musical vehicle of the galopping rhythm in the strings gradually effects a ritardando and a dimuendo over a five-bar passage. The libretto indication, "Ils s'arrêtent," marks the cessation of their ride. At that instance, a distant bell sounds which reminds Faust of Marguerite's emprisonment. He gives the signal to resume

their ride, and the rhythmical accompaniment recommences but at an increased tempo: "I° tempo un poco più animato." This retarding of the tempo, the ensuing break in momentum and, then, the even more stirring resumption of the ride impart tremendous tension for the audience. The effect is brilliant. It was through such manipulation of the orchestra to the ends of dramatic expression, as well as through his expanded and imaginative use of the various instruments that Berlioz established his reputation as an orchestral genius.

In his second portion of "La Course à l'abîme," Faust's visions of terror become acute. He now sees an endless line of skeletons dancing around them:



From this C, the melody line rises gradually to an E flat, to tonally illustrate his mounting terror. Méphistophélès' role in this second half consists largely of contributing to the headlong rush to hell with his interjectory "Hop! hop!." He not only urges the horses on: he himself becomes synonymous with the transporting of Faust to hell. Berlioz's portrayal of Méphistophélès is totally humourless at this point. He has lost all human traits of personality and represents only the black, invincible conqueror of the

underworld. Berlioz forfeited the image of the self-ironizing, sympathetic "civilized devil" in order to present a Méphistophélès that symbolizes hell and damnation.

For Faust, the Hoffmannesque quality of the ride now includes the effect on the two horses. Faust notices their shuddering which reminds one of folklore where animals seem to receive a premonition of the demonic, sometimes in advance of humans. As the ultimate horror, Faust sings of blood, raining down ("Il pleut du sang!"),'' symbol of life ebbing away. He then tumbles into the chasm of hell. In his Mémoires, Berlioz did not make any specific reference to his reading of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Tales, although passing reference is made to the character, Crespel. But, from Baldensperger's description of the late 1820's in France, the occult allure of Hoffmann's Tales was one of the major influences in the pursuit of the fantastique that was very much in fashion.'' Berlioz is known to have frequented the literary circles of that time. And, from the general level of his literary interest, we can assume that he would have been familiar with the Tales of Hoffmann and, like others, would have been influenced by his popularization of the fantastic.

'' This line of verse carries a biblical allusion to the eighth chapter of the Book of Revelation, verse seven (Authorized Version): ". . . and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth . . ."

'' Baldensperger, Goethe en France, p. 130.

The whole portrayal of Méphistophélès has taken by scene eighteen a deadly serious turn, and one wonders how much of the diabolical humour from Goethe has survived in Berlioz's musical production. The recitative passages have been cited above, in which Méphistophélès' sarcastic outlook is made apparent. His more intensive challenging of the human intellect is not conducive to the variety of solo and ensemble numbers necessary for operatic interest. In style, music is capable of transmitting the burlesque of low comedy as witnessed with the drinkers' chorus. Also, the light-hearted parodying of the minuet is successful. But diabolical humour itself implies the presentation of a message on two levels: the comic treatment of subject matter as well as a simultaneous consideration of a non-comic framework of ideas. Music affects the senses directly and subsequently, the feelings, but leaves no time for the intervention of reason, as Ulrich Weisstein has illustrated in his work, The Essence of Opera.''

As Faust and Méphistophélès plunge into hell, scene nineteen of the dramatic legend opens with the "Pandaemonium" or the chorus in infernal language. Méphistophélès is joined by a chorus of demons who dance around him to a chaotic, syncopated melody with nonsense syllables invented by Berlioz for an earlier work, Lélio. From here to the end, musical effect predominates totally over storyline in the dramatic legend. The chief component

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'' Ulrich Weisstein, ed., The Essence of Opera (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1964).

of this musical effect is the dramatic orchestration, fount of Berlioz's genius. The characteristic accompaniment for the demonic figure of Méphistophélès is supplied by the trombone. And in scene eighteen and nineteen the whole orchestra contributes to the overwhelming expression of the diabolic. Another major factor in characterizing Méphistophélès, is the style of singing. The bass role has a commandeering quality in such scenes as in Auerbach's cellar where he supervises the parody of the fugue. To this is added the mocking tone of his serenade which renders a certain strength to the figure in contrast to the wavering, questioning tones of the Faust arias.

CHAPTER 5

The Transition from Oratorio to Opera

The work, La Damnation de Faust, always arouses some confusion as to the question of genre. The composer himself started with the subtitle, "Opéra de concert," before settling upon the novel designation, "légende dramatique." As Berlioz took up in 1845 the "Huit Scènes de Faust" of seventeen years earlier, he clearly intended to produce a "complete dramatic work"[1] on the subject of Goethe's Faust, Part One; one naturally asks how closely La Damnation de Faust came to being included in the realm of opera. A close analysis of the form of Berlioz's work will yield a comparison of the operatic and the non-operatic features; these features will be viewed against any possible parallels of form from Goethe's drama, Faust I, in its original German.

The "Huit Scènes de Faust" consisted of four solo songs and three choruses plus the composite number seven, Marguerite's Romance followed by a chorus for soldiers. In transforming this material into La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz added five new choruses, three instrumental pieces (Minuet, Ballet and March), and a duet and a trio-chorus ensemble. In addition, he composed four pieces which contain

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[1] Jacques Barzun, Berlioz and His Century, p. 231.

some vocal arioso but are to a large extent instrumental. Number eighteen, "La Course à l'abîme," is an example of such a piece. Several recitatives were added in order to convey a necessary amount of dialogue between Faust and Méphistophélès as they proceed through the different stages of Faust's damnation. Significant in this list of added numbers is the minimal amount of ensemble work. The whole score for La Damnation de Faust features only two ensembles: the duet between Faust and Marguerite of scene thirteen in Part Three, and the trio and chorus that follows in scene fourteen.

As an operatic term, "ensemble" refers to a vocal number in which from two to eight of the soloists sing parts in harmony. In the hands of a composer such as Rossini, ensembles were introduced into an operatic work for their decorative effect. Their function was largely limited to adding musical variety; the result was a building up of "counter-sense" or of elements that distracted from the storyline. However, Mozart had already refined the role of the ensemble by using it to express action as well as reflection. According to Joseph Kerman, Mozart accomplished this by restricting the amount of action to be expressed traditionally in recitative; he rather gave it musical and dramatic validity by working it into ensembles and musical selections.[2]

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[2] Joseph Kerman, Opera as Drama (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 134.

The ensemble thus represents a coming together of different elements of the story, impersonated by the different characters singing. It offers the characters the chance to interact. The resulting artistic whole, i.e., the ensemble number, stands as a musical statement of a stage in development of the operatic plot. Ulrich Weisstein, in his article, "The Libretto as Literature," speaks of the phenomenon of "crystallization":[3] this term suggests the effect of the ensemble in achieving a composite picture of the current state of emotional tension being built up in the opera. These moments of crystallization and of interaction among characters are largely absent in Berlioz's work, La Damnation de Faust. Instead, one finds a series of isolated musical tableaux which do not promote a sense of operatic continuity.

Both Goethe's Faust and Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust have been independently characterized as having loose structures. In discussing Faust, Ronald Peacock makes the following statement regarding Goethe's dramatic style: "He has evaded the problems of plot, taking instead the loosest of narrative schemes, and characters who do not need psychological development, their unity consisting in what they represent."[4] And Julian Rushton, applying the term "loose narrative structure" to Berlioz's dramatic legend,

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[3] Ulrich Weisstein, "The Libretto as Literature," Books Abroad 35 (1961), p. 18.

[4] Ronald Peacock, Goethe's Major Plays (Manchester: U. Press, 1959), p. 199.

says "Nor does Berlioz employ a direct narrative line as plays and operas normally do."[5] The result in both works is a series of scenes that lack transition from one to the next and that alternate abruptly between the realistic and the surrealistic spheres of action. In Goethe's Faust, this inclusion of symbolic and allegorical matter, along with the realistic, is meant to convey the depth and vastness of the experiences to which Faust is being subjected. Within this epic framework, however, each scene presents a moment of dramatic essence which is complete in itself and not necessarily dramatically contiguous with the scene that follows. George Lukács, in discussing the distinction between the epic and the dramatic in Goethe's Faust, speaks of the "sensible presence" of each phase: "It is in complete accordance with Goethe's style that in Faust there are scarcely any scenes of which the function would be the creation of transitions or foundations for what is to come."[6] This momentary rounding off of each scene foreshadows the Hegelian dramatic principle which calls for the plastic autonomy of each character and situation. The "Walpurgisnacht" is a classic example of a scene that exists almost in isolation as a dramatic unit, though serving a symbolic function for the drama as a whole.

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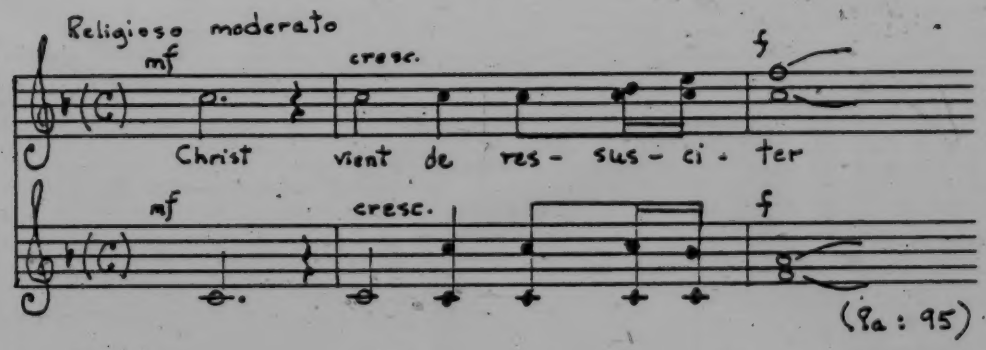
[5] Julian Rushton, "Hector Berlioz. La Damnation de Faust." Programme notes for Deutsche Grammaphon recording, p. 5.

[6] George Lukács, Goethe and His Age (London: Merlin Press, 1968), p. 235.

In the first two parts of Berlioz's work, La Damnation de Faust, where there is a large amount of choral work, the different choral numbers present expositional material which results in a series of separate, enclosed tableaux. In scene two of Part One, the chorus enters with the "Ronde des Paysans"; Faust merely poses a few questions on the sideline. Part Two opens with scene four in which the chorus delivers the Easter hymn as immediate contrast to Faust's despair. He is just lifting the cup to his lips when the sopranos enter with the crescendoing Easter call, Christ has risen!:



In scene six the chorus contributes to the setting of Auerbach's cellar as a group of drinkers who act as an audience for the performance of the "Chanson de Brander." This vulgar song about the rat "in heat" provides a theme upon which the chorus carries out the ironic fugue to the single word, "Amen." Berlioz extended the role of the chorus here beyond merely providing a setting to actually taking part in the action. The chorus interacts with Méphistophélès as it points out the suggested connection between Méphistophélès and Berlioz himself:

Ah ça! mais se moque-t-il de nous?
Quel est cet homme?
Oh! qu'il est pâle, et comme
Son poil est roux!
N'importe! Volontiers! Autre chanson! À vous!'

After these words, Méphistophélès executes his sarcastic song about the flea as his answer to the overly pious fugue. As Faust is ignored in this scene, the linear development of the operatic plot is also pushed aside except for continued expression of Méphistophélès' sarcasm. This execution of the fugue parody was a matter of intense personal and of musical interest to Berlioz, but has little to do with the story of Faust. It becomes a moment apart that finds its justification on musical grounds.

In scene seven of Part Two, the chorus participates in the shape of gnomes and sylphs in the beguiling of Faust. They lull him to sleep on the banks of the river Elbe and cause him to see Marguerite in a dream. The final scene of Part Two is exclusively choral with the "Choeur de Soldats" and the "Chanson d'Étudiants." This setting corresponds to material from Goethe that was presented in the drama along with the Easter festivities. Although displaced, it is still part of Berlioz's series of expositional scenes.

This series of changing settings--particularly pronounced in La Damnation de Faust as witnessed by the variety and number of the choruses included in the first two parts--leaves Faust in the background as a spectator, a

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' Quotations from the Bärenreiter edition of the score are given subsequently by page number, (Vol. 8a, pp. 152-153.).

characteristic that has also been attributed by Peacock to Goethe's Faust figure:

> And in the way Goethe presents him now he is as much a spectator as an actor in the drama. It is usual, . . . to say that Faust 'does' things; but it would be also true to say that he is shown things. He is not simply man living and experiencing; he is man looking at things, or rather, being put in a position from which he can observe them.[8]

Peacock goes on to include Faust with Goethe's historical and classical dramas by virtue of the main figure being presented as a 'portrait'.[9] There is an element of portraiture in the style of Berlioz as well. Parts One and Two of La Damnation de Faust open with Faust singing in solo. He then steps back as the pageantry of the various "still-life" tableaux unrolls before him. These tableaux are organized by scene according to the change in setting provided by different choral numbers: the chorus first represents the peasants, followed by the Easter choir, the drinkers, the supernatural gnomes and sylphs, and finally the soldiers and students. The preponderance of choral work in the first half of the score affirms the oratorio, rather than the operatic, nature of the work.

The stylistic device of actors on stage becoming spectators occurs in an interesting form in such a Romantic drama as Prosper Mérimée's Les Espagnols en Danemarck of 1825 from his collection of dramas, Théatre de Clara Gazul. In this play, the characters derive a running source of

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[8] Peacock, Goethe's Major Plays, p. 170.

[9] Ibid., p. 198.

information about the events of the story as they comment on what they see from the window of their lodgings. In scene three of the second day, Madame de Tourville and her daughter observe the arrival of the smugglers below in the harbour:

MADAME DE TOURVILLE

> Non, je ne vois rien encore. . . Ah! chut! je vois quelque chose de noir qui vient sur l'eau; c'est une barque ou une baleine. - Fermons le volet mieux que ça . . . Elisa!

MADAME DE COULANGES

> Ce sont . . . les contrebandiers?

MADAME DE TOURVILLE

> Voici mon homme au manteau . . . ou plutôt le tien . . . Il serre la main à un autre, il saute à terre . . . Entrera-t-il ici?. . . Bonsoir, Elisa.
> Elle sort.''

A prolonged use of such window commentary would not result in a very dramatic performance: but much of early Romantic drama took the form of "closet drama" that was intended more for reading than for staging.

Berlioz, in his work, La Damnation de Faust, also gave much play to the power of the imagination, or, in the words of the music critic, John Warrack, to the "theatre of the mind."'' It is for this reason that the real dramatic essence in La Damnation de Faust still rests with purely musical expression rather than with the dramatic interaction

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'' Prosper Mérimée, Les Espagnols en Danemarck in Théatre de Clara Gazul (Paris: Éditions Fernand Roches, 1929), p. 77.

'' J. Warrack, "Berlioz and the 'Theatre of the Mind'", The Listener, LXXII (1964), p. 738.

among the characters. Other examples are found in Berlioz's dramatic symphony, Roméo et Juliette; the verse libretto for this work was supplied by Émile Deschamps. The minor roles are treated in a semi-operatic way, but the most dramatic moments are presented orchestrally. This circumventing of true operatic form would lie behind Berlioz by the time he came to compose the score and libretto for Les Troyens in the 1850's.

Faust, then, is an observer of much expositional material in the first half of La Damnation de Faust. Berlioz took the role of spectator even further, though, when he left Faust at the sideline of events that have nothing to do with the storyline. We have already noted the example of the fugue in scene six on a theme from the "Chanson de Brander." An even more famous example occurs in the opening scene of the dramatic legend in which Berlioz introduced Faust, singing alone on the Plains of Hungary. This unusual setting was necessary in order to prepare for the performance of the "Marche Hongroise" that follows in scene three. Such manipulation of the Faust setting received much early criticism, especially by German audiences. In his Mémoires Berlioz made the following justification:

> L'effet extraordinaire qu'elle [Marche Hongroise] produisit à Pesth, m'engagea à l'introduire dans ma partition de Faust, en prenant la liberté de placer mon héros en Hongrie au début de l'action, et en le faisant assister au passage d'une armée hongroise à travers la plaine où il promène ses rêveries. Un critique allemand a trouvé fort étrange que j'aie fait voyager Faust en pareil lieu. Je ne vois pas pourquoi je m'en serais abstenu, et je n'eusse pas hésité le moins du monde à le conduire partout

d'ailleurs, s'il en fût résulté quelque avantage pour ma patition.'[2]

It is clear that Berlioz held the dramatic intensity of the music as an end in itself rather than as a means to the expression of the Faust legend.

Berlioz took further liberties with the storyline and left significant portions of the plot totally unrepresented. The most obvious gap occurs at the opening of Part Four as Marguerite sings the "Romance." The listener, hearing a song of disappointed love, must piece together that the accord reached by Faust and Marguerite in the final two scenes of Part Three has already peaked and is on the wane. Such gaps are also found in Goethe's drama if one examines closely the handling of the Gretchen episode. Faust first beholds Margarete in the street ("Strasse"), and this encounter sets in motion the most realistic section of the drama. The events of this section have been likened to the narration of a folk-ballad: young lad confronts maiden, ruse insures a successful wooing, her mother is removed through a sleeping potion, and maiden suffers downfall. The balladesque character of the episode consists of the setting up of a certain narrative rhythm which calls for the telling of some events of the story, but the omission of others. The death of Margarete's mother is not directly related, nor the birth and murder of her child. J.W. Smeed calls this episode "a dramatized folk ballad" and likens the various scenes to stanzas: "Scene does not lead into scene as in a stage play

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[2] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 398.

of orthodox construction; rather do the individual scenes resemble the stanzas of a ballad, with the stages in the story being separated often by quite long gaps."[13] The telling gap between the scenes "Marthens Garten" and "Am Brunnen" is reflected in the jump that Berlioz inserted between Part Three and Part Four of La Damnation de Faust.

Part Three of Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust is considered to ressemble most closely operatic structure. It opens with Faust singing a very expectant air, scene nine, as he stations himself in Marguerite's room. Scene ten brings Méphistophélès rushing in to warn Faust in brief dialogue that Marguerite is coming. In scene eleven, it is Marguerite who sings a solo, the famous "Gothic" song, "Le Roi de Thulé." The scene is now set for Faust and Marguerite to join in scene thirteen for the singing of the duet. In scene fourteen Méphistophélès adds a third part for the performance of the trio and chorus which concludes Part Three. Such a series of scenes, called by Wolfgang Dömling "eine operngerecht geschlossene Szenenfolge,"[14] provides for ongoing dramatic interest and the advancement of a linear plot. The trio ensemble numbers are responsible for making Part Three more operatic: the duet allows the coming together of Faust and Marguerite in an avowal of their love. And the trio and chorus put their love in perspective as

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[13] J.W. Smeed, Faust in Literature (London: Oxford U. Press, 1975), p. 65.

[14] Wolfgang Dömling, Hector Berlioz, Die symphonisch-dramatischen Werke, p. 116.

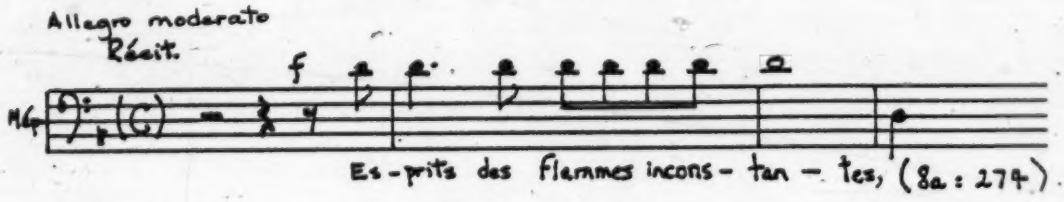
Méphistophélès reminds the listener of the demonic role he plays in all of this. The chorus as well has a more engaging role to play. Rather than straight expositional matter--the setting up of all the various scenes that occurred in Parts One and Two--the chorus offers a very interesting commentary to the trio singing:

> Holà, mère Oppenheim!
> Vois ce que fait ta fille!
>
> . . .
>
> L'avis n'est pas hors de saison:
> Un galant est dans ta maison -
>
> . . .
>
> - et tu verras dans peu s'accroître ta famille.
> (pp. 347-349)

In this way, it fulfils the role of the chorus as in ancient Greek theatre and acts as a mirror of public opinion. Its lines contribute an added layer of meaning to the interaction of the three characters and foreshadow the otherwise abrupt state of Marguerite's fall that is presented at the opening of Part Four. Such a converging of contrasting emotions is the true work of the ensemble: while bringing existing threads of plot together, it also builds interest as to what will evolve hereafter.

But even in Part Three--the most "operatic" section of La Damnation de Faust--there are instances of non-linear development. The most striking example occurs with scene twelve, following immediately after Marguerite's singing of "Le Roi de Thulé" in scene eleven. Marguerite has been singing the "Gothic" chanson in her bedroom as she braids

her hair. Unknown to her, Faust is hidden behind the curtains in her room. As her song reaches a conclusion, the accompanying viola solo sounds the note C of the tonic chord. After a long pause, the lower strings follow with a low F played double piano and pizzicato. The listener is highly expectant that this is the moment when Faust will step out from behind the curtains and join her in a love duet. The scene suddenly switches outside to the street where Méphistophélès invokes the will-o'-the-wisps to collaborate with him. The woodwinds, including four bassoons, enter in unison with forte notes to herald Méphistophélès who summons his magic accomplices:



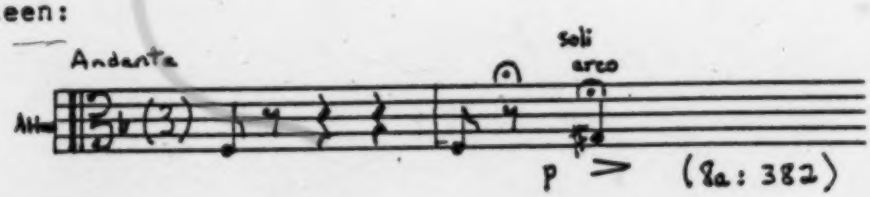
This evocation leads into the capricious minuet that is danced by the flickering will-o'-the-wisps in the key of D major. Méphistophélès then sings a most seductive serenade--in his words--"Pour la perdre plus sûrement." He ends the scene by dispersing the tricky creatures with the words, "Allons voir roucouler nos tourtereaux." And scene thirteen resumes in Marguerite's room as Faust appears to her. In this way, the spatial shift of scene twelve from the room to the street and then back again foreshadows the space montage of the cinema. Berlioz tried to convey a sense of simultaneity: that the two scenes are happening concomittantly.

Even in Goethe's Faust I there is an interesting example of simultaneity arising out of the scene, "Garten," where the two pairs are walking back and forth. First, Faust and Margarete are heard in conversation before they pass on: "Gehn vorüber" is the text indication. Mephistopheles and Marthe then move to centre stage as they banter about in careless chatter. This alternating back and forth between the two couples occurs three times before the end of the scene. The dialogue of the pairs is relatively brief, and the overall effect suggests the fluidity of a slow dance movement as the couple moves into the foreground, then recedes to make room for the other couple. It was Goethe's answer to portraying both snatches of conversation at one time. The scene seems to turn about a spatial axis rather than to move along a temporal one.

In early Romantic drama there were other examples of trying to establish a multiple viewpoint among simultaneous story elements. Ludwig Tieck, in his drama, Kaiser Octavianus, of 1828 tried to present his characters synchronically in a style that would have been very appropriate for cinematography but not for staging in the nineteenth century. The most striking instance of this technique occurs in the first part ("Erster Theil") as Felicitas, wrongly accused of infidelity to the Kaiser, is banished to the woods with her two sons. The sets of characters that take part in this scene in the woods have already been introduced into the drama, and the storyline

now moves back and forth among them. The narration breaks off from Felicitas and switches to the separate circumstances[4] of her two abducted sons. The drama continues with Tieck keeping these different threads of the story alive until they converge at the end. In cinematography, this flashing back and forth between simultaneous moments is possible because of the rapidity with which changes can be made. For drama and for opera, these changes of scene are cumbersome, and difficult for an audience to perceive as simultaneous. It was in fact Shakespeare that the Romantics thought to follow from the example of scene changes in such plays as A Midsummer Night's Dream or King Lear.

In Part Four of La Damnation de Faust Berlioz reverted back to a style of individualized moments. Scene fifteen presents Marguerite waiting in vain for Faust as she sings the "Romance." This solo is sung in the key of F major to a remarkable English horn accompaniment. With his lingering predilection for instrumental expression, Berlioz was as apt to bring together a soloist and an instrument in a duet as two soloists. The chorus of soldiers and students is heard in the distance. The piece ends with the single G sharp note of the viola acting as transition to the tonic key of C sharp minor for Faust's "Invocation à la Nature" of scene sixteen:



Such a transition affords no temporal or spatial continuity: presumably, Marguerite was singing from her room with the sounds of the soldier and student chorus coming in from outside. Faust offers up his invocation to nature from the depths of forests and caves ("Forêts et Cavernes"). The setting changes again as Faust and Méphistophélès take up in scene seventeen and eighteen the fantastic ride to the abyss.

From this point onwards, the dramatic legend becomes increasingly involved in creating the basic contrast of hell versus heaven. This polarization of the theme seems to have preoccupied Berlioz as he converted Méphistophélès into a symbolic figure of hell, devoid of personality. The "Pandaemonium" of scene nineteen presents hell itself, as a chorus of the damned and of demons dance around Méphistophélès. The effect of the wild, chaotic rhythm of their singing is strengthened by the nonsense syllables of an infernal language, concocted by Berlioz for this scene.'' The effect of these nonsense syllables is a harsh sound, featuring a frequent use of monosyllables that allow free play to the syncopated beat in the musical accompaniment. The resulting imagery is one of discord and of blackness. Only the male voices of the chorus take part

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'' Berlioz's use of this infernal language followed the tradition of Emmanuel Swedenborg who as a theosophist of the eighteenth century stressed the proximity of supernatural forces and, more specifically, invisible demons that work upon the human spirit. The prototype of an infernal language for such demons, employing non-sensical syllables and words, was established by Dante and used again by Swedenborg.

in this scene, and the orchestral accompaniment is highlighted by the lower register instruments such as the double bass and the lower woodwinds including the ophicleide and tuba.

At the conclusion of this pandemonium, an epilogue on earth is delivered by the basses to draw an end to this discourse in hell. Scene twenty breaks open with an orchestral accompaniment of harps and a female chorus posing as the celestial spirits. This final scene represents Marguerite's apotheosis and takes place entirely in the upper registers of sound, vocally and instrumentally. What Berlioz created here was a complete musical antithesis of what preceded in scene nineteen. The contrast is absolute in terms of musical register, tone colour and style. In addition to the harps, the accompaniment features the dovetailing of solo-violin arpeggios rather than a pronounced forward movement in melodic line:

In fact, the apotheosis scene does not occur to the listener as coming after the pandemonium as much as on top of it. With such a striking use of contrast Berlioz has caused the final part of his work to move about a vertical rather than a horizontal axis. The opposition of hell and heaven, of damnation and salvation, stands out in plastic relief and creates for the listener a spatial rather than a temporal

framework. The spatial quality of these final scenes gives Berlioz's composition a very modern characteristic that will only come to light in twentieth-century music, described as ". . . reaching across wide registral expanses rather than unfolding in adjacent linear steps."[16]

Julian Rushton has also taken note of the non-linear aspect of Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust: "Most characteristic, however, is the continually renewed challenge of composer to listener, which overrides more tradionally linear habits of listening; the shifting perspectives and modifications of the space-time relationship are as remote from the 19th-century opera as from symphony . . ."[17] Berlioz, as a Romantic composer, clearly set out to illustrate the story of Faust. But the effect of such plasticity, i.e., the concreteness of the images, is that the music attains an autonomous quality that separates it from character. The result is a further break with the linear development of the plot.

The chorus has been called the hero of Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust. Certainly it has a large role to play, particularly with the scarcity of ensembles that would feature more interaction among the characters. It is interesting to note that Berlioz did entertain the possibility of a stage production of his work. In 1847, a

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[16] Cogan & Escot, Sonic Design (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), p. 51.

[17] Rushton, "Hector Berlioz. La Damnation de Faust", p. 5.

year after completing the dramatic legend he corresponded with Eugène Scribe, the leading Paris playwright and librettist, concerning scenario details for a projected staging at Drury Lane in London. The needed support in London, however, was not forthcoming. It was not until 1893 that the dramatic legend was adapted for stage by Raoul Gunsbourg and performed at the Monte Carlo Opera.

With Les Troyens, this question of genre would not need to be raised, because Berlioz clearly set out from the beginning to compose the libretto and score for a "grand opéra." By then, he had decided how much of the dramatic weight must rest with the interaction of the characters--their solos and ensemble numbers--and how much with the instruments alone. Furthermore, his work would illustrate the transfer of literary techniques from Shakespeare and the resulting increase in dramatic continuity.

CHAPTER 6

LES TROYENS : The Portrayal of Dramatic Irony

Both the libretto and the musical score of Les Troyens were composed by Berlioz in the period from 1856 to 1858. France had witnessed a general revival of interest in classical literature during the 1840's and 50's. Berlioz's work, based upon books I, II and IV of Virgil's Aeneid, stands as an example of truly "grand opéra" from nineteenth-century France and as well represents the culmination of Berlioz's lifelong attraction for the Latin poet, Virgil. His preoccupation with classical verse was nurtured at an early age as he was required to recite verses daily for his father, Dr. Louis Berlioz; moreover, quotations from the Aeneid continued to surface frequently in his own writings over the course of his career as musical critic. It is assumed that he worked from the Latin original in composing the libretto for Les Troyens.

Berlioz wrote in his Mémoires of the role of inspiration and encouragement played by the Princess Wittgenstein at the onset of composition:

> Me trouvant à Weimar quatre ans auparavant chez la princesse de Wittgenstein (amie dévouée de Liszt, femme de coeur et d'esprit, qui m'a soutenu bien souvent dans mes plus tristes heures), je fus amené à parler de mon admiration pour Virgile et de l'idée que je me faisais d'un grand opéra traité dans le système shakespearien, dont le deuxième et le

quatrième livre de l'Enéide seraient le sujet.[1]

Also significant in this passage is the reference to "le système shakespearien" and the resulting question as to how this affected the fashioning of Berlioz's libretto for Les Troyens. It is obvious that the example of Shakespeare in exploiting contrasts of setting, scene, character and even genre would find a ready and welcome counterpart in musical drama; the genius of Berlioz, however, lies in his superimposing this Shakespearian system onto the legendary subject matter of Virgil's epic. Each of the five thesis chapters on Les Troyens deals with one aspect of Berlioz's "système shakespearien."

The most outstanding dramatic feature to be incorporated by Berlioz into the composition of his opera, Les Troyens, is the literary technique of dramatic irony. Berlioz's use of dramatic irony is bound up with his elaboration of the character of Cassandra, sister of Hector and prophetess of the Trojan people. In the Aeneid Cassandra receives very brief mention:

> Tunc etiam fatis aperit Cassandra futuris
> ora dei iussu non umquam credita Teucris:
> (Liber Secundus, 246-247)[2]

Berlioz expanded this brief reference into a heroine's role which dominates the first two acts of his opera. Jeffrey Langford explains the expansion of Cassandre's role by

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[1] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 469.

[2] P. Vergili Maronis, Aeneidos (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894), p. 287.

citing Berlioz's attraction for the type of heroine he found in her: a character capable of intense emotion, passion and self-sacrifice.[3] More important, Berlioz needed a heroine for the first two acts of his opera; and through Cassandre's role as prophetess she adds perspective to the events presented in Troy and foreshadows the second part of the opera to follow.

In presenting a musical account of the sack of Troy, Berlioz was faced with the problem of finding an equivalent for Virgil's use of the technique of flashback. Book One of the Aeneid tells of Aeneas landing on the Carthaginian coast, then in Book Two Aeneas, guest at Dido's court, relates the Trojan disaster. For Virgil such a means of narration offered variety as compared to a staight-forward chronological account and also created a new perspective of time and distance for considering the monumentality of the fall of Troy. As well, it imitates the Odyssey, as the second part of the Aeneid ressembles the structure and spirit of the Iliad. Queen Dido's reaction to the Trojan drama as told by Aeneas is part of this narrative perspective: over the course of the narration Dido falls in love with Aeneas, his physical presence enhanced by the narrated glory of his exploits. The recounted details of the sack of Troy form a backdrop to the events of Book Four and throw the ensuing love affair of Dido and Aeneas into

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[3] J. Langford, "Berlioz, Cassandra, and the French Operatic Tradition" Music and Letters, LXII, Nos. 3-4 (July - Oct., 1981), p. 311.

dramatic immediacy.

The immediate sphere of action is the only one available to musical drama since the words sung are appreciated for their contribution to creating an effect of the moment. For one singer to relate the sack of Troy parallel to Aeneas' role in the Aeneid, which requires over eight hundred lines--the entirety of Book Two--would require so much lengthy aria or recitative that the opera would lapse into absolute tedium and inert monotony. Berlioz's solution was to portray directly on stage the collapse of the Trojan city, initiated by the entrance of the great wooden horse.

The setting of Troy in acts one and two of Les Troyens is balanced by the Carthaginian location found in acts three, four and five. The resulting bipartite division lent itself to separate stagings to which Berlioz himself had to agree, when it became apparent that the Paris Opera was ignoring the work in its entirety. In fact, it was the Théâtre-Lyrique that staged the initial performance of the second part of the opera on the fourth of November, 1863, under the title "Les Troyens à Carthage." Berlioz never did witness a performance of the first part, and a total performance of Les Troyens was not accomplished until 1890.

Structurally, the duality of location led to the creation of two different heroine roles: Cassandre, a soprano, holds sway in acts one and two to be replaced by Dido, a mezzo-soprano and chief female voice in acts three

to five. Both heroines commit suicide in the opera as victims of the greater destiny of establishing a new Trojan settlement in Italy. Their personal fate finds resonance in the fate of their respective peoples, the Trojans and the Carthaginians, as only the cry of "Italie!" surfaces above the ruins of Troy and Carthage.

The creating of resonance between different characters and different events is a very Virgilian characteristic as seen in the way all elements in the story of the Aeneid contribute to realizing the founding of a new Italy and of Rome. From the standpoint of Carthage, Virgil had Aeneas look back and expose the Trojan disaster: this finds resonance in the demise of Dido's own city after her downfall. Where Virgil established unity by looking back in time, Berlioz chose the perspective of looking ahead through the role of the seer, Cassandre.

Dramatic irony is understood as the expression of words that have a hidden meaning for the characters involved, it usually being the audience that grasps the full import of what has been said. The characters on stage only come to a full recognition of the truth later at the point of downfall or dénouement. A situation of ignorance is implied on the part of one group in contrast to knowledge or foresight enjoyed by others. Where, in drama, the author expects the audience to be knowledgeable of a situation of dramatic irony and to reflect upon it, in opera or musical drama a self-contained entity must be presented which affects an

audience emotionally but in no way offers an intellectual exercise. Typical for Romantic thinking, Franz Grillparzer speaks of the nature of music to affect the senses, and therefore feelings, but not the faculty of the intellect: "So sind die Töne in ihrer ersten ursprünglichen Bedeutung: Unmittelbar durch sich selbst, ohne notwendige Dazwischenkunft des Verstandes gefallende, oder missfallende Sinneneindrücke."[4] The consequence of this for Berlioz was the necessity to present simultaneously on the operatic stage the two differing planes of awareness, i.e., the dramatic irony of the Trojan scene.

It is Cassandre who, from the very first moment of her entry on stage in act one, establishes an air of discrepancy with all those around her, as the following stage directions indicate:

> Pendant la fin de la scène précédente elle a paru au milieu des groupes parcourant la plaine avec agitation. Son regard est inquiet et égaré.[5]

Her anxious and distracted appearance creates an immediate contrast with the mood of rejoicing that has been conveyed by the Trojan people singing the opening chorus of the opera. This choral number proceeds at a lively Allegro tempo in 6/8 time, the final part being in 3/4. Cassandre's entrance is announced by a rapid rising scale of

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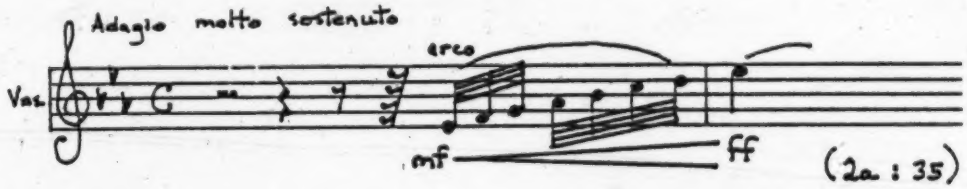
[4] Franz Grillparzer, Sämtliche Werke, III (München: Carl Hanser, 1964), p. 886.

[5] Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens, New Edition of the Complete Works, IIa, by Barenreiter (London, 1969), p. 35. Subsequent excerpts from the score will be indicated by volume and page number only.

sixty-fourth notes from the string section,



which contrasts sharply with the lilting triplet movement of the opening chorus. This scale passage becomes synonymous with the character of Cassandre and is repeated at the conclusion of her opening recitative before she begins her first air.

From the first lines of this recitative it is made clear that Cassandre is plagued by an oppressive sense of impending doom:

> Les Grecs ont disparu!. . . mais quel dessein fatal
> Cache de ce départ l'étrange promptitude?
> Tout vient justifier ma sombre inquiétude!
> (2a : 36-37)

She then goes on to sing of a vision she has experienced of the dead Hector:

> J'ai vu l'ombre d'Hector parcourir nos remparts
> Comme un veilleur de nuit, j'ai vu ses noirs regards
> Interroger au loin le détroit de Sigée . . .
> (2a : 37-38)

Finally, she stands back and takes a sober look at the Trojan people with the concluding two lines of the recitative:

> Malheur! dans la folie et l'ivresse plongée
> La foule sort des murs, et Priam la conduit!
> (2a : 38)

With this opening recitative, then, Cassandre has been very clearly characterized as the seer of Troy's demise through her acute powers of perception and visionary foresight as

well as her gifts of wisdom and judgment concerning the present: she recognizes the true nature of the Trojan people in their blind acceptance of a faulty state of affairs.

In the opera, Cassandre as prophetess fulfils the dramatic function of foreshadowing themes and events. Thus, Berlioz gave a double edge to the narrative role: the fall of Troy is first hinted at through the ominous forebodings of Cassandre, then is actually experienced beginning with Aeneas's account of Laocoon's monstrous death. This double perspective is also featured in the way Chorèbe, beloved of Cassandre, reacts to her warnings of disaster. His blind rejection of her pleas for escape are echoed by the Trojan populace, who disregard her visions and wheel in the Trojan horse. In this way Cassandre represents a position of knowledge and foresight in opposition to Chorèbe and the Trojans, who ignore her until it is too late.

Duo number three, sung by Cassandre and Chorèbe in the first act, offers the first illustration of Berlioz's use of dramatic irony on the operatic stage. This occurs after Cassandre has described in gory detail to Chorèbe, (himself dying with a Greek spear in his side,) the vision she has had of the Trojans being slaughtered and left to drown in rivers of blood. Her description of her vision is presented in recitative with the indication, "Récit. mesuré" to suggest the restrained or guarded mode of delivery that enhances the dramatic effect. The Allegro tempo is maintained throughout, after the initial indication of "un

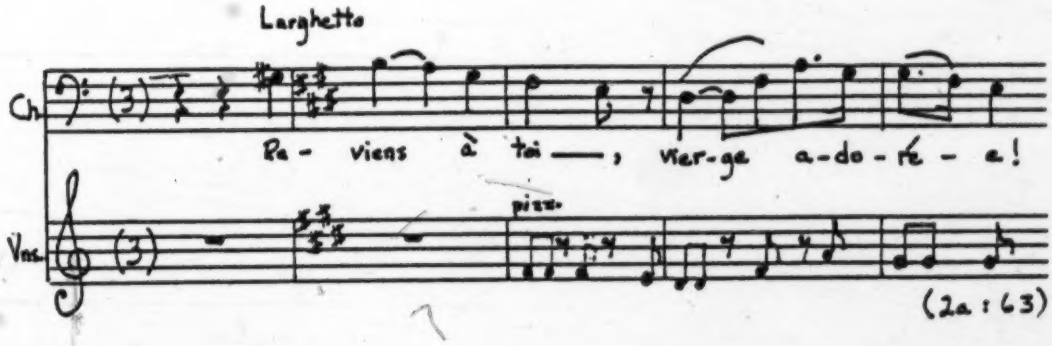
poco più animato" to allow for the emotional nuances of a very distraught prophetess. At the conclusion of her recitative Cassandre falls half-fainting into Chorèbe's arms, unable to support single-handedly the weight of the Trojan fate.

Chorèbe answers Cassandre in the soothing tones of a lullaby as if to capitalize on her semi-conscious state:

> Reviens à toi, vierge adorée
> Cesse de craindre en cessant de prévoir;
> Lève vers la voûte azurée
> L'oeil de ton âme rassurée.
> Laisse entrer en ton coeur un doux rayon d'espoir.
> (2a : 63-65)

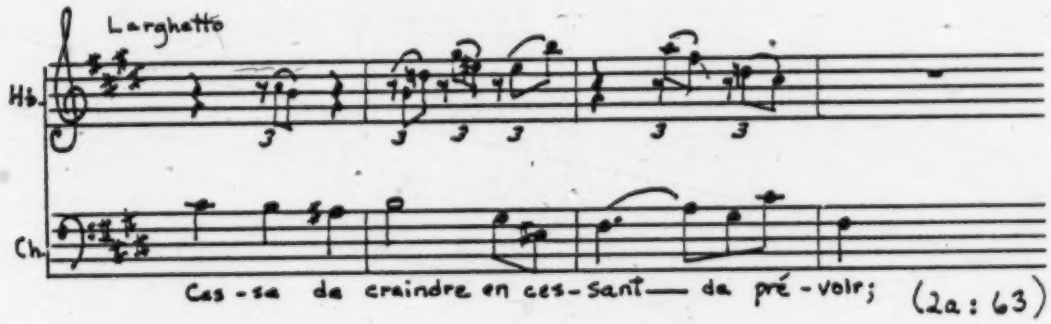
These words are sung to a Larghetto introduced by the pastoral sounds of thirds from the flute:

The melodic line of this Larghetto moves largely by single-note steps with a few instances of skips in dotted rhythm to end a musical phrase. Slurs contribute to the overall effect of a gently flowing line of melody:



As seen in the above example for the violins, the string

accompaniment with its pizzicato notes supports this mood of gentleness by keeping the background sounds light and unsustained. The result is a lessening of the dramatic tension built up during Cassandre's recitative. This string accompaniment continues as Chorèbe sings, "Cesse de craindre en cessant de prévoir," with the addition of a triplet figure in the oboe part:



The use of such a broken triplet figure conveys a playfulness to correspond to Chorèbe's optimism. But his words convey an underlying meaning of which he himself is not aware: to ask a "seer" of the future not to see implies an irony to which Chorèbe is oblivious. He is a man of the present, unwilling to peer into the future and into the unknown. His unpretentious style of music suggests a contentment with the present.

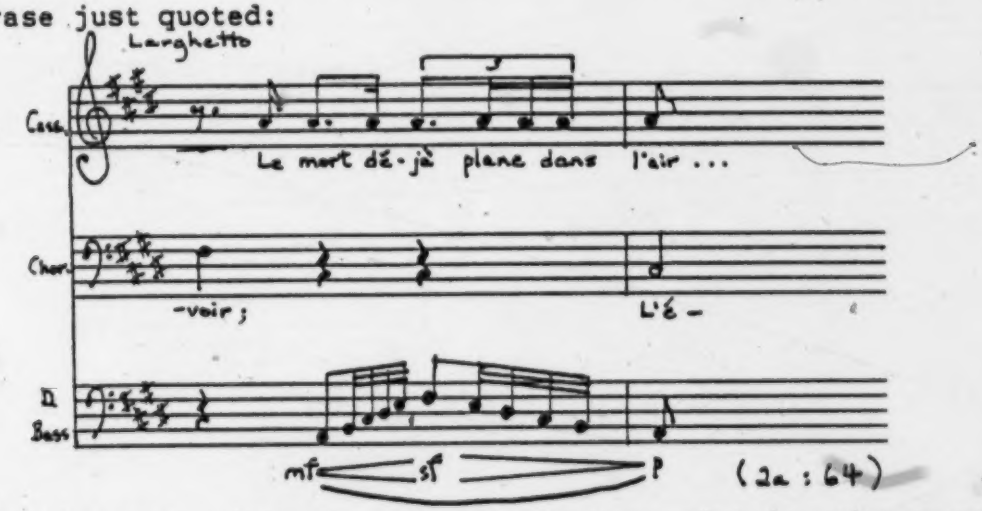
In contrast Cassandre interjects into this Larghetto single phrases that are pregnant with meaning and with evil foreboding for their future and for the future of Troy. She sings the following three lines, outlining her vision of death, which will be reiterated later in this same duet:

La mort déjà plane dans l'air. . .

Et j'ai vu le sinistre éclair
De son froid regard homicide!

(2a : 64)

As Chorèbe sings the last syllable, "-voir," in the above excerpt from the score, Cassandre enters with the first phrase just quoted:

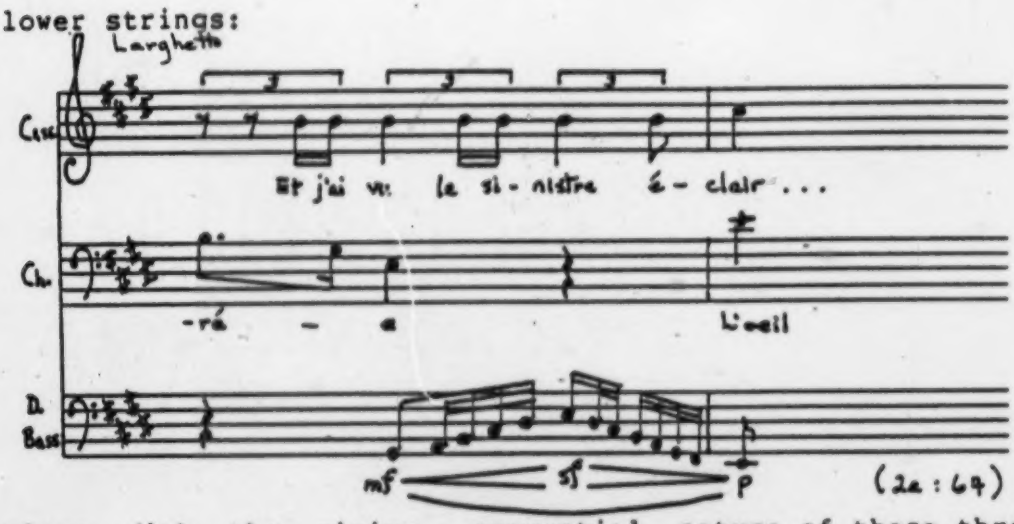


This phrase is entoned on the single note of A in the most bare recitative style possible: the rhythmic pattern is dictated by the word stress, with "mort," "-jà," and "l'air" receiving the longer note values. The result of the monotone is to leave all emphasis on the verbal expression of the words, the musical medium of the voice here having been reduced almost to the zero point. The agitated rhythm,

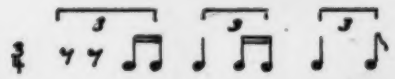
is sufficient for creating a statement vibrating with dramatic tension and intended by Berlioz to pierce the air in startling opposition to the lulling tones of Chorèbe. Rhythmical, tonal and verbal opposition is confirmed.

This phrase of Cassandre is accompanied in the lower string section by a rising and descending scale passage of thirty-second notes indicated by the double-bass entry in the above excerpt. This rapid scale passage reminds the listener directly of the string passage that announced Cassandre's first entry onto the stage of the opera, Les Troyens. A musical link is thus provided to sustain her part in the dramatic irony.

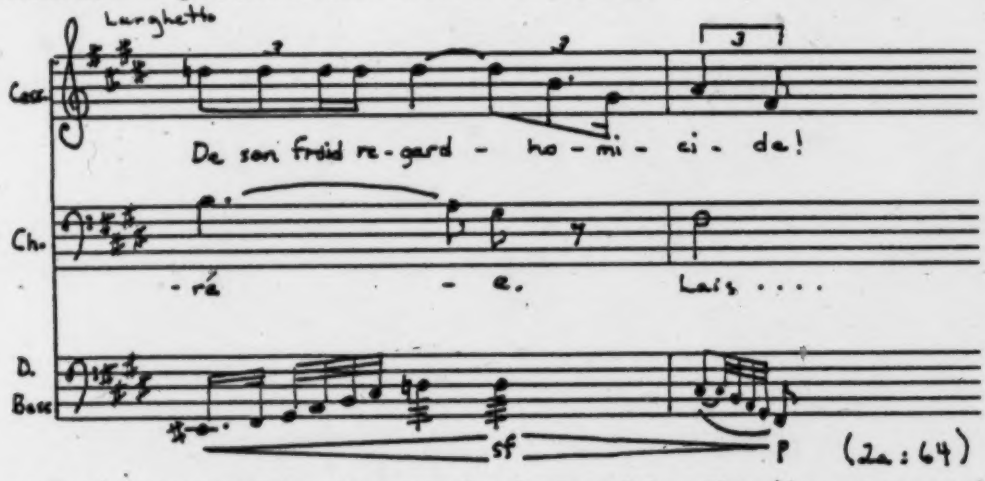
As Chorèbe sings of gazing into the cloudless sky, (la voûte azurée), Cassandre counters with her second line, "Et j'ai vu le sinistre éclair," again offering a play of imagery on the concept of seeing or looking. This second line is sung by Cassandre one note higher on the monotone of B, again accompanied by the rapid scale passages in the lower strings:



Along with the rising, sequential nature of these three interjections, extra tension accumulates in this second line through a regular jerky rhythm, resembling a military drum call:



The final line, "De son froid regard homicide!," in answer to Chorèbe's singing of a soul being reassured, begins on the note D and then falls to F sharp in concluding Cassandre's personified vision of Death:



Each of these three phrases is ignored by Chorèbe as seen by the way he begins his next line on the first beat of the bar before Cassandre has finished singing. His last line in the Larghetto, "Laisse, laisse entrer en ton coeur un doux rayon d'espoir," epitomizes the absolute discrepancy of outlook that exists between the two singers: he, singing of a sweet ray of hope, and she, of Death's cold murderous eye. As a last resort Cassandre pleads with Chorèbe to surmount his blind love for her and to fulfil his filial obligation to his father in the face of disaster. Chorèbe takes another step in the opposite direction and answers with a pastoral ditty in which he sings of the gentle swell of the sea, the

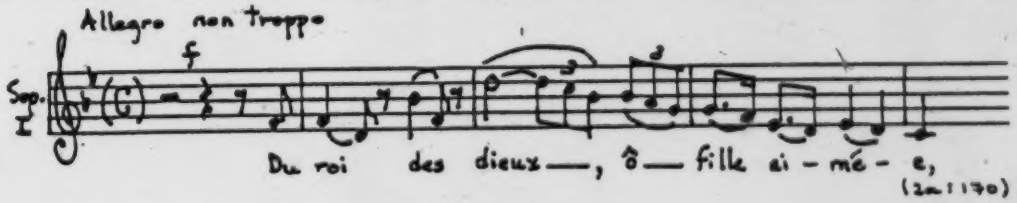
cheerful shepherd with his contented flocks and joyful birds proclaiming a hymn of peace.

The blindness of his love for Cassandre prefigures the madness of the Trojan people as they recklessly decide to lead within their city walls the monstrous horse left by the Greek forces. Berlioz staged this scene as number eleven in the score, finale to act one with the subtitle "Marche Troyenne." The march first sounds far off in the distance from an offstage chorus and a band, consisting of three divisions that are placed at varying distances behind the curtains. As the sound becomes louder, and the procession accompanying the horse moves closer, so does the Trojan doom approach. In opposition to the throngs of people offstage and in the distance, Cassandre stands alone onstage. This physical configuration symbolizes the deeper meaning of their outlook toward fate. The chorus comes on stage for verse three of the march, whereupon together with Cassandre they apprehend the noise of arms from inside the horse: this marks the one moment in the scene when the Trojan people and their seer achieve a temporary unity before they again part ways in their diverse interpretations of the omen.

It is interesting to note that in Berlioz's final version of the score the wooden horse itself was to be left offstage. Perhaps the actual presence of such a contraption produces an undesirable amount of sensation to the detriment of the essential operatic effect. Apparently, Berlioz subscribed to the principle that such an image can be more

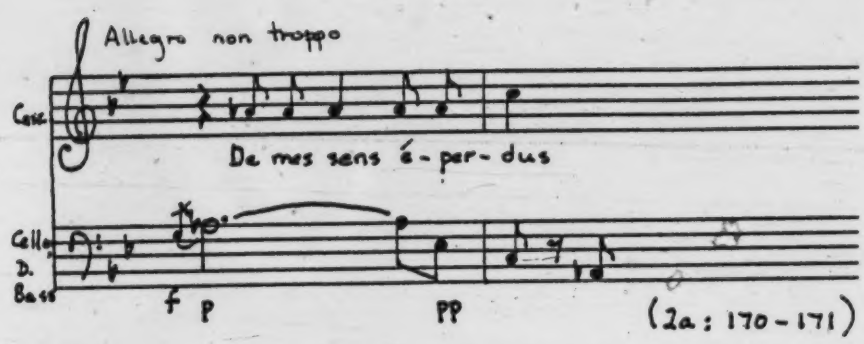
dramatic if left to the powers of the imagination inspired by the music. It also represented his reluctance to draw sharp lines of distinction between imagination and reality and thus between art and life. Because of the obvious technical difficulties and expense, the need to bow to financial restraints might have been another factor.

The music for the "Marche Troyenne" is typically martial in presenting an arresting melodic line characterized by chordal leaps and catchy rhythmic figures:



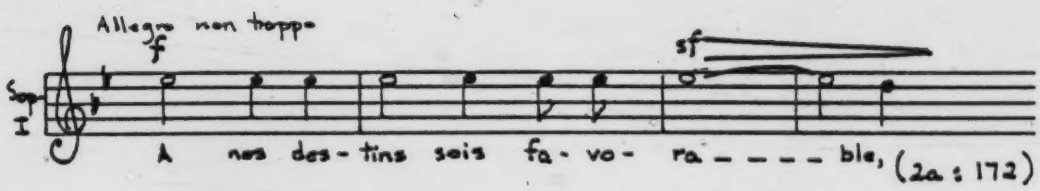
As seen in the above soprano line, the opening phrase is built upon the notes of the tonic chord of B flat, rising to a proclamation on the high D of the word "Dieux." This is followed by a descending line of triplets and two sets of a dotted eighth-note figure to end the phrase. At this point it is only the first division of the offstage band, i.e., nine brass, that presents the basic theme. The result is an aggressive sound in defiance of a prophesized doom.

Cassandre now enters with her statement of disbelief upon hearing the jubilant tones expressed by this processional march in the distance: "De mes sens éperdus . . . est-ce une illusion?" It is the orchestra that supports Cassandre musically as she stands alienated from the band sounds offstage; an A flat chord is heard from all orchestral sections as signal for Cassandre to begin:

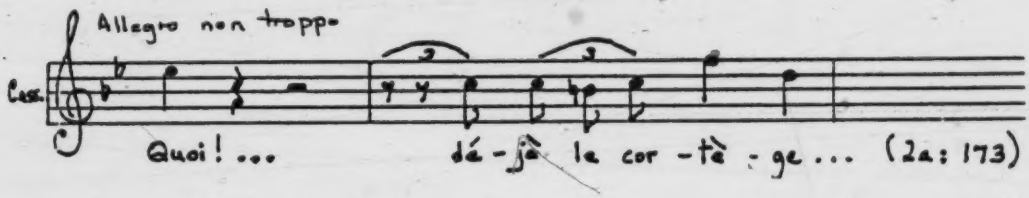


The ear is struck by this chord, occurring directly after the opening phrase of the march in B flat and offering a deceptive resolution of the previous G seventh chord (V,/V in B). Extra emphasis is derived from the grace note G and the accompanying dynamics of loud then instantly soft. Rhythmically, Cassandre's vocal line follows the stress of the words without any use of set figures. Also significant and in contrast to the jaunty movement of the march theme is the use by Cassandre of a single note A flat, rising to a C for the last syllable, as if in question. This style of questioning disbelief continues in sequence as Cassandre's next line is entoned on B flat, rising to D on the last syllable, and a third phrase on a D finishing on E flat, arrived at via B flat. The recitative character is maintained through a choice of note values in keeping with the rhythm of the words.

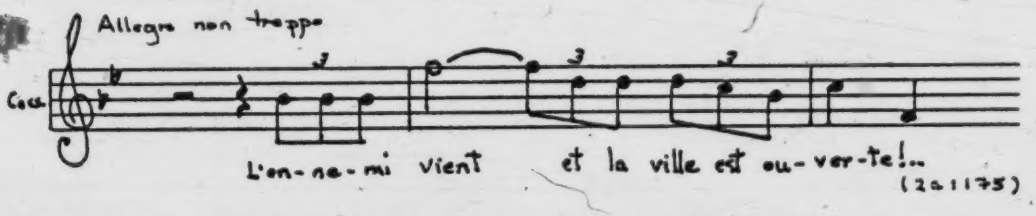
The processional music continues with the chorus moving into an episode that musically features a high-note motif on E flat and a much more straight-forward rhythmical treatment:



This same musical phrase is repeated to the words, "Rends Ilion inébranlable." Cassandre's exploding exclamation, "Quoi!" punctuates this smoother choral line; in addition, it is she who now counters with the use of a triplet rhythm which throws all emphasis on the word "cortège" :



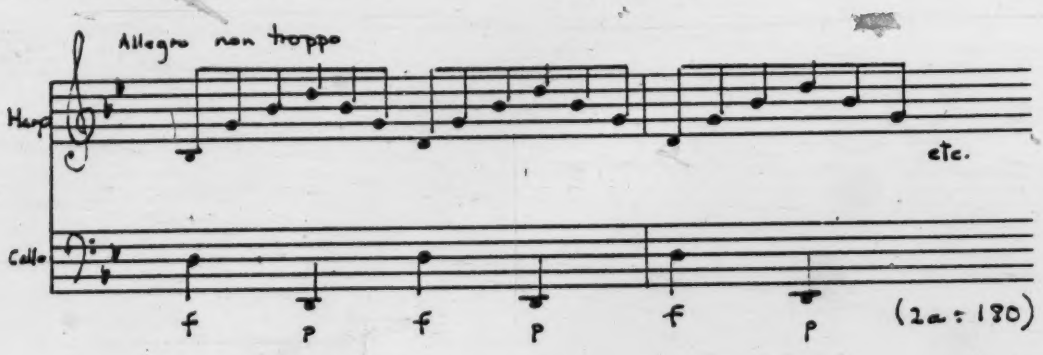
The chorus is silent as the strains of the march are heard from the band closer at hand. Cassandre is here fulfilling the role of narrator as she interjects with observations on the progress of the procession and on the expanding state of danger for the city. Her three successive phrases, reflecting the reality of disaster, are now expressed musically by a fall on the last syllable:



Disbelief has passed to resignation, and Cassandre sings of the Trojans as "Ce peuple fou qui se rue à sa perte."

The music for number eleven gains tremendous momentum as the second division of the band, consisting of eight

saxhorns,[4] with cymbals, join in with the first division of brass and chorus to present the second verse of the march. As the music moves into an episodal section, even more movement is added as the third division of the band--eight oboes and six or eight harps--comply in a phrenetic rendering of the martial theme. A mood of agitation is also conveyed by the pizzicato string accompaniment which accentuates the primary beats of the bar through dynamics and through a repeated broken octave figure:



The tenor voices contribute to this hypnotic impression with a line of unsustained eighth notes. The result is a mood of reckless abandon which exaggerates the dichotomy of jubilance and doom. As the chorus sings idyllically of the flutes of Dindyma, the Phrygian trumpet and the Trojan lyre, Cassandre is barely heard as she observes that the great equine structure is approaching: "L'énorme machine roulante/S'avance!. . . la voici!" In musical sound her single-note melodic line does not prevail against the chorus

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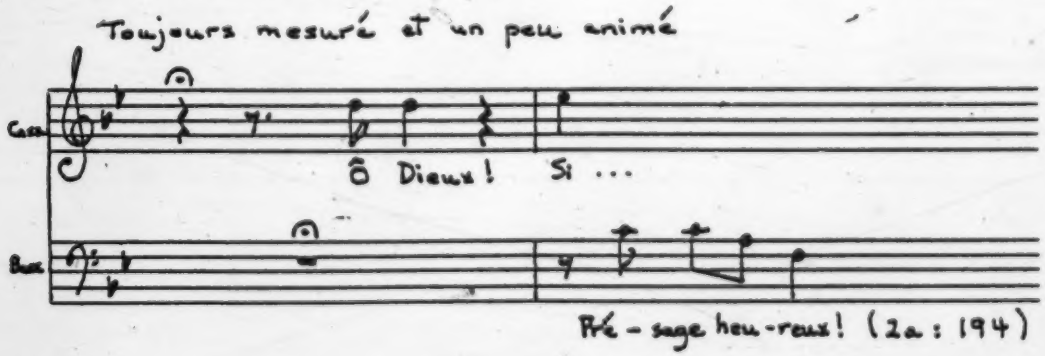
[4] The saxhorn was one of the unusual instruments used by Berlioz. He justified its inclusion in the orchestra because of its pure, full sound in his treatise on instrumentation, p. 285.

and against the three divisions of the band, in particular the third one, just as in the plot of the opera she does not impress them with her warnings.

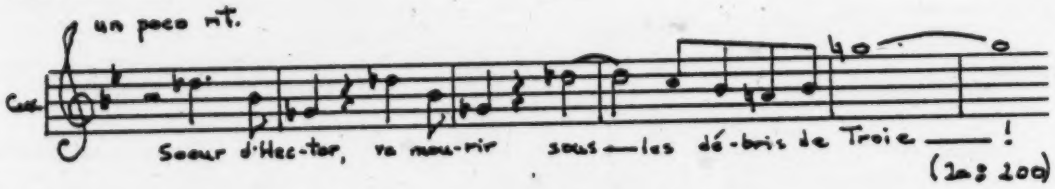
Cassandre is not heard from again in the "Marche Troyenne" until the point where a drum roll signifies the sound of clashing arms emitting from the great wooden horse. The crowd breaks off momentarily from their singing of springtime lilies-of-the-valley, ("des muguets du printemps"), in order to question the source of the noise. The mood of tenseness for this ten-bar passage is suggested by the tempo indication, "Toujours mesuré et un peu animé," (2a : 193-194). It is the one instance in the march when the different components of the vocal scene appear to move in one unified direction both in meaning and in musical sound. The bass voices first, then Cassandre and finally the other three choral parts use a recitative style of vocal line that allows one part to interweave with the next. Rubato is prominent to express the drama of questioning. Cassandre is aroused to utter one last questioning word, "Si. . .," in the desperate hope that the people will at least take cover:



Her last ray of hope is extinguished, however, as the basses

break in with their interpretation of the menacing sound: "Présage heureux!" And the chorus resumes its hymn of jubilation, until the procession moves off again into the distance, repeating four times--in ever increasing tragic irony--the phrase, "rayonnez triomphants."

Cassandre is left on stage in her extreme isolation, railing against the receding strains of the march theme. As these distant sounds suddenly cease, the string orchestra rushes in with a spasmodic flurry of chromatic sixteenth notes. This bridges the gap between the surrealistic sounds of the march and the reality of Cassandre's prediction. Her role as prophetess fulfilled, she now announces her own death:



This repeated broken triad establishes the key of G flat major and builds tension toward the final climatic word of "Troie!" This name is shrieked out by Cassandre--not on an expected G flat--but rather on a G natural, part of a diminished seventh chord played double forte, creating a disquieting effect of total disharmony. Number eleven then concludes with a general descending movement of semitonal slides from the orchestra in toto which allows an absorbing of this alarming G natural and a concluding chord in the key of B flat minor. An individual can be aware of fate and the elemental powers but is no match for halting the force of

destiny. Herein lies the epic quality as perceived by Berlioz: the individual standing in lieu of his nation. Chorèbe's blindness is reiterated in the folly of the Trojans; perhaps Cassandre represents the suicidal fate of the whole Trojan people. But, as well as a Trojan, she is a seer and this has added a second layer of meaning to the first two acts of the opera. Through dramatic irony the tragedy of the Trojans is intensified and is thrown into tragic relief.

Musically, Berlioz supported the image of dramatic irony through the simultaneous presentation of contrasting styles, tempi and harmonic effects. Cassandre must first rail against the other soloist, Chorèbe, who tries to subdue her with the soothing tones of a lullaby. She answers him in a jerky rhythmic monotone, devoid of melody and of musical style. The characteristic accompanying figure for Cassandre's singing is a rushing scale passage which contrasts with the surrounding style of the others singing. Finally, Cassandre confronts the whole chorus of Trojan people: her frantic interjections stand apart from the jubilant mêlée of martial sounds. Throughout Berlioz employed strange harmonic resolutions signaling the unexpected of which only Cassandre is aware. His use of dramatic irony provided for a simultaneous musical presentation of two threads of storyline: Cassandre's disturbing foreknowledge and Chorèbe's blissful ignorance.

CHAPTER 7

Pantomimes: A Play-within-a-play

Berlioz's use of operatic numbers, bearing the indication "pantomime," is indicative of the predilection in nineteenth-century French opera for spectacle. The word "spectacle" refers to those scenes of divertissement which called for spectacular settings and costumes; these appealed to the French operatic taste for pomp and grandeur. The result for the operatic stage was an emphasis on the visual content, with ballet, dance numbers and pantomime forming an integral part of the diversion. In terms of dramatic structure, these scenes of diversion suggest the distancing technique of a play-within-a-play.

The French, with their early love of ballet and spectacle, had called for their inclusion in opera from its beginnings in the seventeenth century: "As it developed, French opera absorbed all of these earlier dramatic modes, most particularly the ballet and the spectacle (known in France as 'le merveilleux'), and also that attention to word which came to typify the performance of the Comédie-Française."[1] Moving into the nineteenth century, the French opera audiences retained their love of spectacle

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[1] Patrick J. Smith, The Tenth Muse (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 43.

despite the reformist aesthetic of Christoph Willibald Gluck, who sought to restrain operatic music to the expression of a story line. Gluck struggled--not just against the French love of spectacle--but chiefly against the Italian school of opera which encouraged musical embellishment for its own sake: the one amounting to visual diversion from the dramatic concept, the other, aural diversion. With his pantomimes Berlioz made concession to the French taste for operatic variation, as well as for the requirements of the Paris Opera.[2] He maintained his integrity as a composer, however, by using music in these numbers as a very effective dramatic vehicle.

The first pantomime in Les Troyens, Number Six, is instrumental except for a few, muted lines from the chorus. As Andromaque leads in her son, Astyanax, to place flowers at the altar in mourning for Hector, and to receive the blessings of King Priam, their movements are outlined by a clarinet solo. This is one of several examples from Berlioz's work where the instruments are made to carry the weight of dramatic expression rather than the voice parts. The most telling example is from his dramatic choral symphony, Roméo et Juliette where the most climatic moments--such as the love confrontation between Roméo and Juliette, or the death scene in the Capulets' tomb--are not expressed vocally. Berlioz explained his outlook on this

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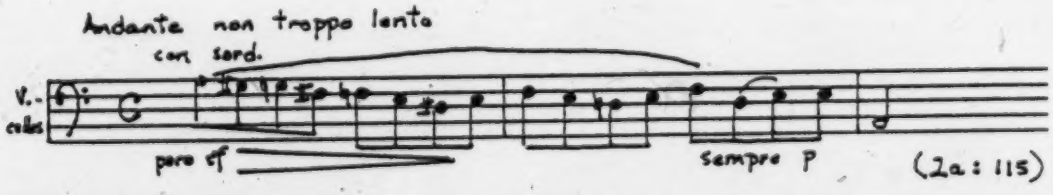
[2] For a quite a while, dance scenes were obligatory for an opera to be performed in Paris, and even great foreign composers (like Wagner and Verdi) had to prepare a "Paris-version."

question in the preface to Roméo et Juliette:

> . . . les duos de cette nature ayant été traités mille fois vocalement et par les plus grands maîtres, il était prudent autant que curieux de tenter un autre mode d'expression. C'est aussi parce que la sublimité même de cet amour en rendait la peinture si dangereuse pour le musicien, qu'il a dû donner à sa fantaisie une latitude que le sens positif des paroles chantées ne lui eût pas laissée, et recourir à la langue instrumentale, langue plus riche, plus variée, moins arrêtée, et, par son vague même, incomparablement plus puissante en pareil cas.[3]

Berlioz remained first and foremost a composer of instrumental music. His offerings for the operatic stage were, to a considerable extent, motivated by his desire to be finally recognized by the Parisian audiences, who only took notice of works performed on the Paris opera stage.

Pantomime Number Six is preceded by the boisterous atmosphere of the dances and public games presented in Number Five, "Combat de Ceste--Pas de Lutteurs." As the lower strings enter, "con sordino," with a chromatic run that introduces the minor key of Number Six, an immediate contrast is established to the forte ending of the previous number:



(La: 115)

The only transition is offered by the opening sforzando note which then falls in pitch and in volume to a piano sound which is to be maintained. The melancholy tones of the

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[3] Hector Berlioz, Preface for Roméo et Juliette (New York: Kalmus), p. vii.

clarinet solo, expressing the grief of Andromaque for the slain Hector, stand in opposition to the public rejoicing of Number Five. This opposition conveys the tragic irony of an individual's suffering, lost in the service of a larger destiny.

The visual content for this pantomime was gleaned by Berlioz from two sources in the Aeneid. In Book Two, Aeneas relates to Dido how he sought out a point of advantage for attacking the Greek forces in Troy. In so doing he came across a passageway that had been used by Andromache to bring her son to visit his grandparents:

> Limen erat caecaeque fores et pervius usus
> tectorum inter se Priami postesque relicti
> a tergo, infelix qua se, dum regna manebant,
> saepius Andromache ferre incomitata solebat
> ad soceros et avo puerum Astyanacta trahebat.
> (II, 453-457)

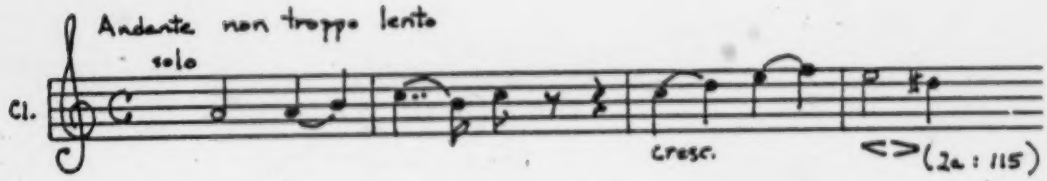
The other contributing reference for Berlioz's image comes from Book Three of Virgil's work, where Aeneas, in his wanderings, sails to the coast of the island, Epirus, and encounters Andromache as she performs the Rites of the Dead at Hector's cenotaph:

> ante urbem in luco falsi Simoëntis ad undam
> libabat cineri Andromache Manisque vocabat
> Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem caespite inanem
> et geminas, causam lacrimis, sacraverat aras.
> (III, 302-305)

Andromache by this time has not only suffered remarriage as a slave to Pyrrhus, the Greek war hero, but has been passed back to become the wife of the Trojan, Helenus. Berlioz combined these references into an image of the suffering individual caught up in the machinations of war. Through the

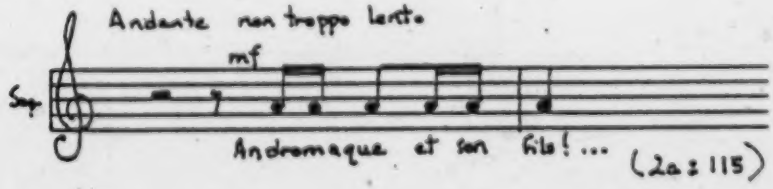
use of pantomime and the accompanying instrumental solo, Andromaque's rites of mourning are distanced and thereby given symbolic significance.

The clarinet solo enters at the Andante non troppo lento tempo under the additional mood indication of "doloroso assai":

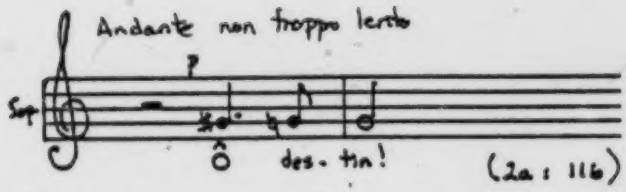


This opening phrase shows the voice-like quality of the melodic line for clarinet: the slurred notes, the dotted-eighth note pattern and the crescendo-decrescendo on the final two notes are all reminiscent of the musical expression of words. The words missing are more than compensated for by the pensive, reed timbre of the clarinet.

The clarinet solo conveys the mood of Andromaque's suffering as it accompanies her movements across the stage. An additional element in the scene is provided by the muted comments of the chorus in recitative style. The chorus is fulfilling here the role of a spectator as in Greek tragedy. It first tells who has entered on stage--

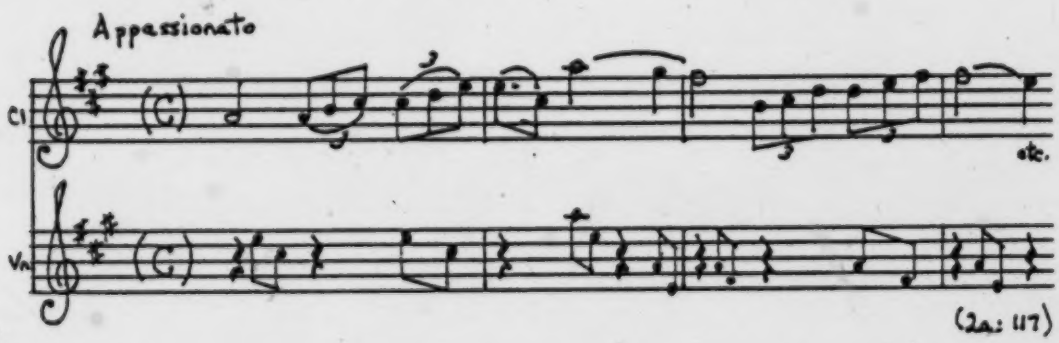


--and then lets fall the key word for the whole scene, "destin!":

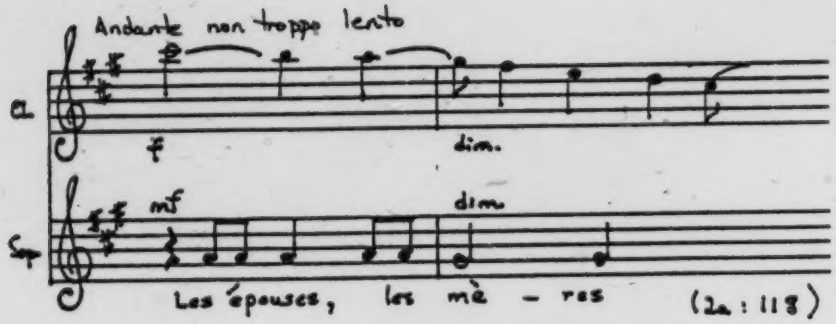


The subdued tone and monotonous register of the unaccompanied choral lines stand quite apart from the expressive line of the clarinet. Thus, a new perspective is created for the events on stage: with Andromaque's role confined to pantomime and the chorus acting as spectator, one is reminded of the situation of a play-within-a-play.

As the chorus sings, "Ces muettes douleurs!"--which in part refers to Andromaque but also to the whole pantomime technique of this opera number--an Appassionato section begins. Additional movement is expressed through triplet figures in the clarinet part and through the upper string accompaniment of slurred eighth notes on the off-beat:

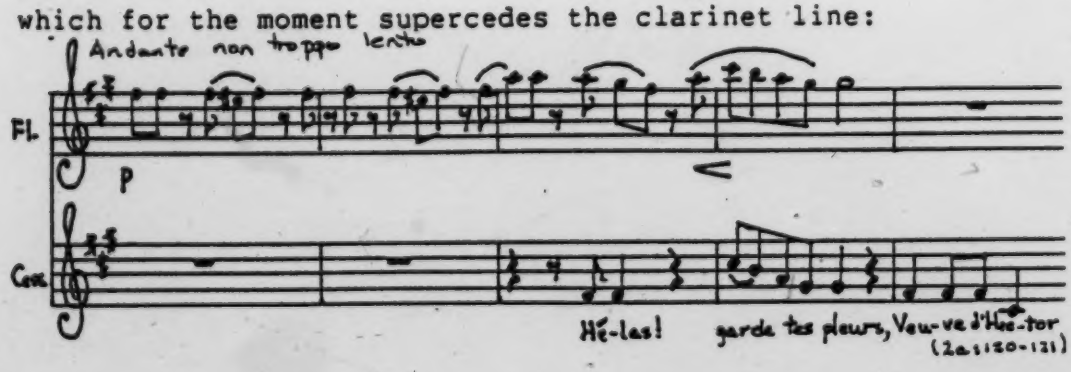


During this Appassionato, Andromaque proceeds to the throne of King Priam and Queen Hécube to have her son, Astyanax, blessed. The section climaxes with the clarinet playing a high C followed by the chorus singing of wives and mothers:



The climactic point in the music brings out the image that Andromaque represents for the opera: she bears tribute to womanhood, that rears the heroes for war and destiny, but then loses them. Number Six does not end on this note, however. With the introduction of harps and a trombone interlude, Berlioz depicted musically the majesty of Priam who rises to bless the child; and Cassandre is seen to pass at the back of the stage.

Cassandre casts a whole new light on the grieving figure of Andromaque. As has been established in the foregoing chapter on dramatic irony, the appearance of the anxious prophetess always imparts an air of foreboding and adds a second layer of meaning to the operatic scene. Here Cassandre's interjectory statements are announced by a flute passage with an eighth-note figure, interrupted by rests, which for the moment supercedes the clarinet line:



Cassandre enters, as seen in the above example, to caution Andromaque about her tears and to warn her of worse disasters to come. With this, the tragic irony of Andromaque's situation is increased. Not only does she stand as the suffering wife and mother: she will undergo the ultimate degradation as a woman when she is passed into enemy hands as an enslaved wife and later returned. To Cassandre, this implies a passive role to which she would never have submitted. At the end of Act Two in Les Troyens, Cassandre and her followers actively choose suicide when threatened with annihilation from the Greeks and the enslavement of women that would follow. With her line, "garde tes pleurs," Cassandre seems to hint at a type of self-discipline needed by the individual. This will find resonance later in the opera when Énée must put aside his personal feelings for Didon in order to resume his pursuit of the Trojan destiny.

It is therefore significant that Andromaque is depicted from a distance in pantomime whereas Cassandre is always presented more actively in vocal roles. Eventually, the figure of Andromaque will only be of interest to Didon; in the fourth act, she will ask after Andromaque in order to justify her own undoing of ties to a deceased husband, Sychaeus, and remarriage to a foreigner. For both women, obsession with self has clouded their concept of destiny. Berlioz went to some length in the libretto text to depict the excessive emotion of Andromaque: concerning her feelings

for Astyanax--"Elle attire Astyanax contre son sein et l'embrasse avec une tendresse convulsive," (2a : 118). Later, after Priam has blessed the boy, Berlioz notes: "L'émotion douloureuse d'Andromaque augmente," (2a : 120). And finally, she leaves the stage, "Les armes la gagnent" (2a : 121). Her exit is accompanied by the clarinet playing from the opening theme of Number Six in F sharp minor:

This passage offers musical recapitulation for the listeners and also, in terminating this play-within-a-play, allows mother and son to withdraw. Number Six stands as a musical interlude between the lively dances of Number Five and Énée's frenzied report of Laocoon's death by monstrous serpents in Number Seven. Dramatically, it offers a moment of reflection on the fate of the individual who must progress beyond a private concept of destiny to a public one. This reflection on the part of the audience is encouraged through the staging technique of pantomime which restricts the emotional impact of the events presented. The normal operatic tradition of direct actions and singing is broken, and the audience sees itself mirrored on stage through the comments of the chorus and of Cassandre.

The play-within-a-play technique is even more obvious in Berlioz's composition of Number Twenty-nine which bears the title, "Chasse Royale et Orage." Basically, this number

recreates the scene from the Aeneid of the hunt and the storm sanctioned by the goddesses, Juno and Venus: as Dido and Aeneas take shelter in a cave, their love is consummated under the pretense of marriage. Virgil succinctly gave a setting for the hunt in the mountains where wild life abounds:

> Postquam altos ventum in montis atque invia lustra,
> ecce ferae saxi deiectae vertice caprae
> decurrere iugis; alia de parte patentis
> transmittunt cursu campos atque agmina cervi
> pulverulenta fuga glomerant montesque relinquont.
> (IV, 151-155)

The Virgilian "in montis" became in Berlioz's stage setting for Number Twenty-nine "Une forêt d'Afrique, au matin."[4] He then proceeded to point out the high crag from Virgil, the cave that surfaces later, as well as a small stream that flows into a pool:

> Au fond, un rocher très élevé. Au bas et
> à gauche du rocher, l'ouverture d'une grotte.
> Un petit ruisseau coule le long du rocher
> et va se perdre dans un bassin naturel bordé
> de joncs et de roseaux.
> (2b : 443)

For the operatic stage the setting must exist spatially and cannot come into being gradually as in the epic. Also out of bounds for the opera are the wild goats and the herd of stags, that are described above by Virgil for the appreciation of the mind's eye. Any suggestion of movement, at the opening of this scene, is taken up by Berlioz in his depiction of mythological creatures, who are seen to bathe in the pool: "Deux naïades se laissent entrevoir un instant

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[4] Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens, New Berlioz Edition (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1969) 2b : 443.

et disparaissent; puis on les voit nager dans le bassin." David Cairns has made note of the neoclassical characteristics of this setting in the way that Berlioz ". . . has peopled his scene with the woodland satyrs, bathing naiads and glinting streams and waterfalls which help to make it the neoclassical masterpiece it is, a movement that has been compared to some great Claude or Poussin, and that combines attributes of both painters, Poussin's grandeur, universality and dynamic form, Claude's numinous clarity and sense of the golden moment."[3] The presence of these divinities from Greek mythology and the allegory of Didon impersonating the goddess, Diana, retain Berlioz's concept of nature in a classical vein rather than give any hint of a Romantic "return to nature."

With this enclosed African forest scene, Berlioz distanced the hunt spatially; and with the references to Greek mythology he extended the time frame as well. The manipulation of time and space was a favourite topic of Romantic writers such as Novalis and Blake. In this vein, Tieck used undetermined settings in his play, "Der gestiefelte Kater": ". . . Tieck played even with the fundamental rationalist categories of 'time' and 'space'; his settings alienate because they depend on no actual locale or fixed historical moment. . ."[4] Berlioz increased

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[3] David Cairns, Responses, Musical essays and reviews, p. 102.

[4] Gerald Gillespie, Introduction to "Der gestiefelte Kater" by Ludwig Tieck, p. 16.

the sense of alienation in this number by having the characters transcend their operatic roles as Didon and Énée and assume a part in the allegorical hunt. The portrayal of Dido as Diana, the hunting goddess, is an image that Berlioz had taken from Book One of the Aeneid where Dido first appears to the wandering Trojans:

> exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutae
> hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades; illa pharetram
> fert umero gradiensque deas supereminet omnis
> (I, 499-501)

In the libretto introduction to Number Twenty-nine, Didon is clearly depicted as representing the goddess: "en dernier lieu on voit paraître Didon vêtue en Diane chasseresse, l'arc à la main, le carquois sur l'épaule. . ."(2b : 443). Énée's appearance in semi-military dress, ("en costume demi-guerrier"), symbolizes his lapse from military duty in the pursuit of pleasure.

The consummation of love between the pair is a Virgilian concept that, in the Aeneid as well, is represented by the symbolism of the hunt and the storm. Berlioz chose to represent this moment theatrically rather than dramatically since there are no singing roles; Macdonald refers to it as "the most theatrical moment in the whole opera,"[7] because of the combination of ballet, spectacle and very descriptive music to picture the ravages of the hunt and storm. The music itself is so dynamic and complete that it can be performed on its own as a concert

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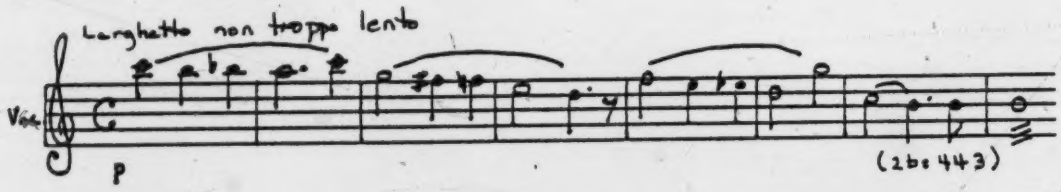
[7] Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 166.

selection in the style of a symphonic poem.[1]

To open the "Chasse Royale et Orage," Berlioz composed a Larghetto section in the key of C major. This Larghetto aptly illustrates the peaceful forest setting which comes to view as the curtains rise for Act Four. The violins enter with the high notes of a melody that gracefully and gradually descends:



This melodic line is first supported by the flutes, then the oboe and finally the bassoon. The general falling tone expressed by the melodic line and by the register of the wind instruments chosen, indicates the direction of the whole symphonic poem: the light, airiness of the opening bars, (cf. the frequent trills from the flute and oboe), will gradually develop into the heavy, aggressive sounds needed to illustrate the rhythm of the hunt and the explosive clamour of the storm to follow. The direction of falling also symbolizes the moral lapse of Didon that will take place when she enters the cave with Énée.

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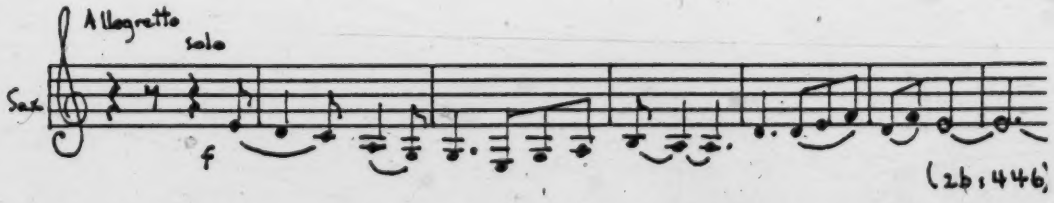
[1]The term "symphonic poem" was first used by Franz Liszt in the mid-nineteenth century to describe a type of program music for orchestra. It explored the concept in a one-movement work that extolled the descriptive qualities of music and appealed to the Romantic yearning for subjectivity. Freer in form than the concert overture, it was used to develop a literary or pictorial idea through the use of contrasting sections, shaped by the mood or scene being depicted.

The cello and double bass take up the opening melodic line of the violins; the lower notes bring a more serious tone which is offset in timbre and pitch by notes from the piccolo and flute, characterizing the two naiads that appear and then disappear. This leads to a drum roll and the introduction of the first instrumental solo. The flute and clarinet entone an expressive melody which conveys the emotion of longing and yearning rather than just contributing to atmosphere:

This is immediately answered in a duet-like style by the oboe and bassoon solo which establishes a duality of instrumental response, symbolic for the theme of love being enacted in this pantomime.

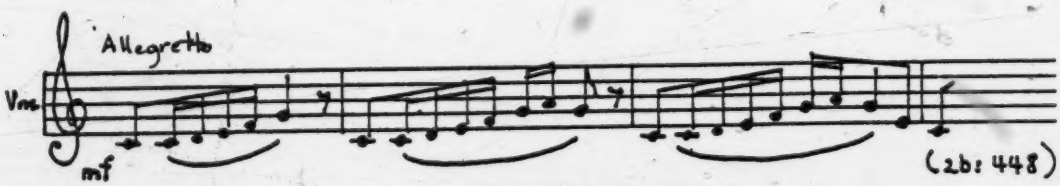
The naiads are now peacefully bathing in the pool, and this scene is painted in tone by the broken chord accompaniment of sixteenth notes from the violins. The instrumental selection moves then into a second part which features a saxophone solo at an Allegretto tempo in 6/8 time:



This marks the beginning of the royal hunt; the solo phrase

is immediately echoed by a saxophone off in the distance to represent the various stages of the hunting party. The fanfare causes the naiads to take flight. As the superior divinity to be presented in this scene, they signify a straight-forward reference to the idyllic setting of fountains and rivers over which they preside. Their alarm at the sound of the hunt indicates an end to the innocence of the opening forest scene.

The hunt now proceeds in earnest as the violins and violas establish a rising scale figure of sixteenth notes, the first beat of the bar being reinforced by the double-bass, the horns and the timpani:



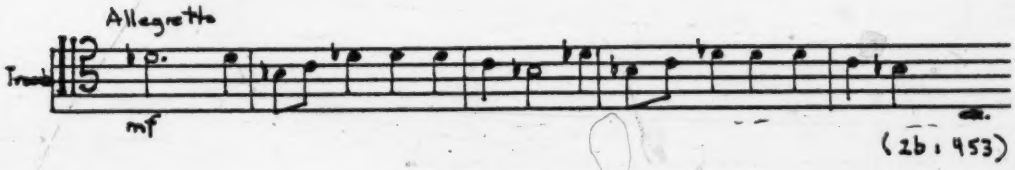
The reinforced first beat and the repetition of this ascending run five times clearly depict the regularity of a galloping movement: it is tone painting for the Tyrian hunters who now gallop across the stage accompanied by dogs.

The musical portrayal of the hunt gains in momentum as the strings lose prominence to the wind instruments in a chord passage:

This use of the wind section results in a very aggressive

sound in keeping with the overall imagery of the hunt: Didon, the huntress, is out to ensnare Énée and distract him from the high call of his destiny.

A trombone solo,



marks the transition to the musical painting of the storm itself. The menace of the elements--rain, hail, lightning and thunder--is rendered by rushing sixteenth-note passages on the strings,

and by frequent booms from the timpani. The original hunting call from the saxophone continues to weave its way in and out of the gathering storm even as hunters are seen to take shelter on stage.

Énée's son, Ascagne, now traverses the stage on horseback; this action is accompanied by the rising figure, used near the beginning of the Allegretto, to suggest galloping:

The key is now that of G minor rather than the opening C

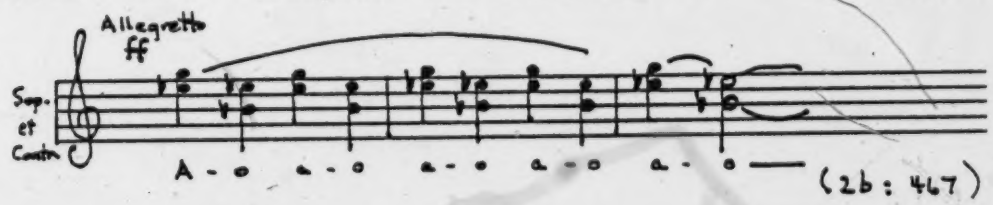
major. The appearance of Ascagne at this point would appear to be related to his role as catalyst in the love affair between Didon and Énée. Both in the Aeneid and in Les Troyens he is fondled by Dido as she absent-mindedly dreams of Aeneas. The Virgilian suggestion is that the goddesses have endowed him with properties of Cupid.

Didon and Énée arrive on the scene; but, according to the Bärenreiter edition of the score, after seven measures of music they disappear into the cave. Their brief appearance is in agreement with the pantomime aspect of the number which presents the events in capsular form. As in a play-within-a-play this brevity reduces the immediacy of the actions presented. The momentum of the tone painting for the storm reaches a climatic E flat major chord from the whole orchestra, double forte, to coincide with their entering the cave.

As in Virgil, the storm symbolizes the passion of their love affair. In their absence the stage is peopled by nymphs of the forest: "Les Nymphes des bois paraissent les cheveux épars sur le haut du rocher, et vont et viennent en courant, en poussant des cris et faisant des gestes désordonnés" (2b : 467). The nymphs are somewhat inferior to the naiads on the echelon of Greek divinities. Moreover, their dishevelled hair and disorderly behaviour bear reference to what is happening within the cave. According to Virgil, the nymphs cried out in pleasure at the consummation of love: "conubiis summoque ulularunt vertice nymphae," (IV, 168). Thus, the

nymphs carry some hint of a connection to sexual imagery which was missing with the naiads at the beginning of the number.

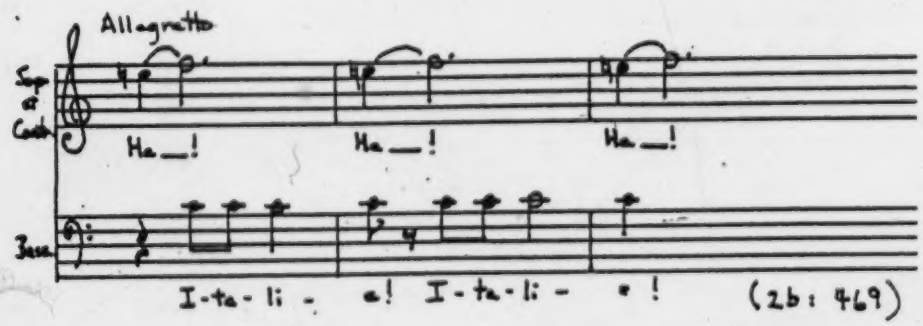
With this progression of divinities, Berlioz offered comment upon the happenings of the hunt and storm. The innocent naiads are frightened by the idea of the hunt; the nymphs, an inferior divinity, are not alarmed but stay to bear witness to the immoral proceedings. The chorus of sopranos and altos--the one instance of vocalization in this number--enter to express the nonsense cries of the nymphs:



They then continue in jeering tones to sing the word, "Italie!" with a double forte tone, the only real word to be distinguished in the whole selection. The other syllable they then sing is "Ha!" which continues the spirit of mocking. Despite staging difficulties, Berlioz indicated in the score that the stream should swell into a torrent at this point, and other waterfalls spring forth. This overflowing results from an intensification of the storm and is intended to contribute to the sexual imagery of the cave scene. Berlioz, however, avoided any hint of melodrama by his use of the nymph commentary. The nymphs throw the events of the cave into relief and reduce their significance to part of an overall happening greater than the lives of Didon and Énée. This relativism is the end result of using the

technique of a play-within-a-play.

This distancing effect is increased with the arrival of the satyrs and sylvans who dance grotesquely with the fauns: "Les Satyres et les Sylvains exécutent avec les Faunes des danses grotesques dans l'obscurité," (2b : 469). The satyrs, with their pointed ears and horns, are characterized by their association with Bacchus, God of Wine and of the appetite and pleasure this implies. The grotesque quality of their dancing is indicated musically by the discordant rhythm produced by the upper voices singing a syncopated "Ha!" and the bass voices counteracting with "Italie!":



Such a juxtaposition offers an effective comment on the state of affairs: "Italie!"--a reminder of Énée's mission, "Ha!"--the mocking of it.

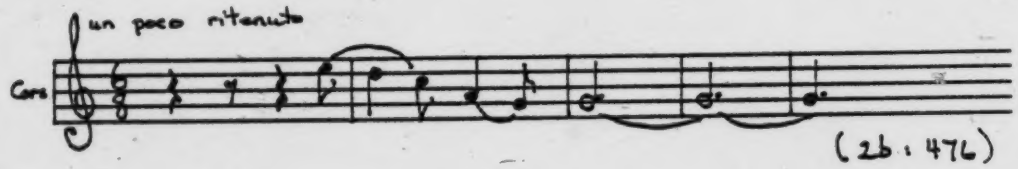
Berlioz now introduced the symbolic element of lightning which was given in the Aeneid as the signal from Juno for consummation: "fulsere ignes" (IV, 167). The lightning is indicated tonally by a double forte chord from the whole orchestra and most especially from the kettle drums. The tree that is to be struck by this lightning falls to the stage and supplies flaming branches for the fauns and

sylvans to dance around with. This activity reaffirms their complicity with the scene of storm and the passion implied.

The grotesqueness of these secondary divinities suggests distortion or a break with what would be considered natural. This distortion approaches the comic when taken together with the nonsense syllables, "O-a," and the exclamation, "Ha!" that is being sung by the chorus. In any event, it provides an intermediary step for the audience's perception of the cave scene, one of the marks of a play-within-a-play. The normal theatrical--or in this case, operatic-mimesis--has been broken by placing the event of the hunt and storm in spatial or plastic relief through the use of pantomime with no singing. As well, the role of spectator has been moved up onto the stage itself through the intervention of the mythological creatures. The result for the audience is a guiding hand towards objectifying the events on stage. With such an autonomous work there is little interest left in the actual linear development of the story line. The libretto text outlines the program for the entire pantomime, and the events presented conclude with the closing bars of the symphonic poem. Therefore, one is lead to appreciate the episode for the totality of its spectacle: the consummation of love, the mythological backdrop, the ballet, and most of all, the music.

This pantomime prepares for the remainder of Act Four which will feature the love duet between Didon and Énée. But it also looks ahead to Act Five when their love affair will

be put aside in order for the Trojan destiny to proceed. This is another feature of the play-within-a-play: to present a certain episode that is connected to the whole work in such a way as to be symbolic of it. Berlioz concluded the scene by having the mythological creatures disappear as the orchestral tone falls in volume and momentum. The sense of denouement is effected by a "un poco ritenuto" passage in which the French horn plays the hunting fanfare one last time. The tempo is obviously slower than before, the sounds of the French horn more distant. The melodic line of the fanfare concludes by falling only, leaving off the rising half of the opening theme:



This music forms a quiet ending to a very stormy passage: as this storm comes to end, so also will their love affair, though not so quietly.

With this number, Berlioz created a selection that is autonomous both in a dramatic and in a musical sense. Musically, the royal hunt and storm can stand as a symphonic poem, i.e., a complete musical form within itself. Dramatically, Berlioz separated this number from the rest of the opera through setting, through the allegorical nature of the pantomime and through the commentary of the supernatural beings--all of which contributes to the unfolding of a play-within-a-play.

The danger of such autonomity, in an operatic number, is that it can be so easily cut, and this is the fate that Number Twenty-nine has often suffered. Ironically, it was Berlioz himself who called for its omission at the initial performance in 1863 when he saw how abysmally it was being rehearsed:

> L'intermède de la chasse fut pitoyablement mis en scène. On me donna un torrent en peinture au lieu de plusieurs chutes d'eau réelle; les satyres dansants étaient représentés par un groupe de petites filles de douze ans; ces enfants ne tenaient point à la main des branches d'arbre enflammées, les pompiers s'y opposaient dans la crainte du feu; les nymphes ne couraient pas échevelées à travers la forêt en criant: Italie! les femmes choristes avaient été placées dans la coulisse, et leurs cris n'arrivaient pas dans la salle; la foudre en tombant s'entendait à peine, bien que l'orchestre fût maigre et sans énergie. D'ailleurs le machiniste exigeait toujours au moins quarante minutes pour changer son décor après cette mesquine parodie. Je demandai donc moi-même la suppression de l'intermède.'

Berlioz appears unrealistic in his expectations; but he had already suffered the blow of having to cut his opera, Les Troyens, in half in order to get anything at all staged. (In 1863 it was only the second part of the opera, Les Troyens à Carthage, that was performed at the Théâtre-Lyrique). His whole performing career in Paris was a succession of such compromises: he tried to pursue his ideals of musical expression, but was restricted by public demand and taste. Yet it was the strength of the music in such a composition that allowed for its separate existence as a symphonic poem. Both in number six, where the clarinet acts as a soloist, and in number twenty-nine, where the whole orchestra paints

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' Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 476.

a picture in tones, the dramatic expression lies with the instruments alone. The changing moods of the forest scene are conveyed through changes of tempo and through variations of momentum and volume achieved by different types of instruments. The grotesque quality introduced by the satyrs is rendered musically through syncopation and discord. This element of discord foreshadows the tragic outcome of the actual love affair between Didon and Énée.

CHAPTER 8

Berlioz's Use of the Supernatural

After Cassandre's prediction of suicide at the end of Act One, Berlioz opened the first tableau of Act Two with the appearance of Hector's shade, ("l'ombre d'Hector"), in the twelfth scene, "Scène et Récitatif." In the study of a Gesamtkunstwerk such as the opera, Les Troyens, it is natural to ask what influences--literary and historical--surface in Berlioz's portrayal of this apparition.

Because of Berlioz's self-avowed proposal to treat his operatic material according to a Shakespearian system, one would first look for a Renaissance gloss to the appearance of the spectre. Does Hector's shade, for instance, bear any resemblance to the ghost of Hamlet's father, since it is well-known how struck Berlioz was by this drama at its first performance in Paris in 1827? Moreover, he had a constant reminder of the Danish tragedy in the person of his wife, Harriet Smithson--"the fair Ophelia." The other possible source of inspiration was Romanticism itself with its predilection for the subjective side of nature and its fascination with the irrational tendencies of the human mind. Berlioz as a young composer was very much a part of the Romantic circles in Paris as witnessed by the group of

artists that were in attendance for that first night of Hamlet, the eleventh of September, 1827: Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Delacroix, Gérard de Nerval, Théophile Gautier, and of course, Berlioz.[1] Théophile Gautier, the most prominent French Romantic writer of supernatural tales along with Charles Nodier, was a great admirer of Berlioz's music, and in turn, Berlioz composed a set of six songs, "Les Nuits d'été," in 1840-1841 to words by Gautier. The channel for Romantic influence was certainly open to Berlioz.

The shade of Hector as it presents itself to Énée in Les Troyens reminds one of the Shakespearian treatment of the supernatural and accords with the popular superstition surrounding ghosts. It is in marked contrast to the neo-classical practice as exemplified, for instance, in Voltaire's tragedies. Cumberland Clark in his work, Shakespeare and the Supernatural, gives the first criterion as the ghost's appearing ". . . in strange and creepy circumstances, at dead of night, when it is cold and still and lonely."[2] The curtains rise for Act Two of Les Troyens on the dimly lit nocturnal setting of a palace room where Énée is sleeping. The orchestra conveys a mood of mystery and apprehension through a tremolo string accompaniment in B flat minor (concluding key of the previous act), played by

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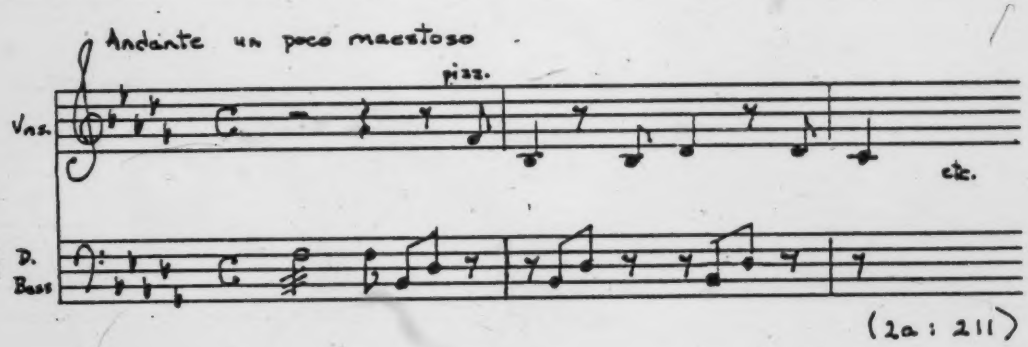
[1] Peter Raby, 'Fair Ophelia' (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1982), p. 58.

[2] Cumberland Clark, Shakespeare and the Supernatural (London: Williams & Norgate Ltd., 1931), p. 65.

the upper strings and a series of ascending runs performed by the cello and double bass. It is again the strings that accompany the slow walk of the spectre as he proceeds from a back corner of the stage towards Énée's bedside: "d'un pas lent et solennel mesuré sur le rhythme de l'orchestre" (2a : 211). At an Andante tempo, the pizzicato of the strings contributes to the suspense of Hector's approach:



(2a : 211)

The actual physical description of Hector's shade, outlined by Berlioz in the libretto, complies closely to the concept from the Aeneid. In keeping with tradition a ghost becomes visible in a guise recognizable from its life on earth. Virgil depicted Hector's body as it suffered death at the hands of Achilles, who also commanded the body to be dragged behind a chariot:

> in somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector
> visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus,
> raptatus bigis ut quondam aterque cruento
> pulvere perque pedes traiectus lora tumentis.
> (II, 270-273)

These battle wounds, which would be indiscernible on the operatic stage, were reduced by Berlioz into a pervading image of bloodiness: "le spectre sanglant d'Hector." The details concerning the beard and hair, ("Sa barbe et sa

chevalure sont souillées et en désordre"), are taken straight from Virgil: "squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis" (II, 277).

Important in Elizabethan folklore was the belief that a ghost would not speak unless first spoken to. Furthermore, the services of an educated person were thought to be required in order to entice it into conversation. Thus, in the opening scene of Hamlet, the nightwatchman, Marcellus, calls upon Horatio to address the ghost: "Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio."[3] Whether intentional or not, Berlioz adhered to this principle by having Énée first sing before the apparition delivers his message.

The appearing of a ghost is motivated by the need to remind earthly beings that something is amiss and that action must be undertaken to ward off an ominous future. This functional aspect became embroiled during Elizabethan times with the readibility of the character to receive a ghost; in other words, the relationship between the ghost and the visited becomes a subjective one. The ghost of Hamlet's father confirms suspicions that have already been germinating in Hamlet's own mind. In turn, the ghost displays a certain aloofness and singularity of approach: it must be catered to and only comes of its own bidding. It has not found the rest due a Christian soul.

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[3] William Shakespeare, Hamlet, ed. George Rylands (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959), act 1, scene i, line 42.

Once addressed, the apparition could be interpreted by an educated Elizabethan as a straight-forward source of information or as an omen of evil. Accordingly, upon its entry, Hamlet immediately questions the ghost as to its intent:

> Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
> Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
> Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
> (1. 4. 40-42)

What for the Elizabethans represented a possibility of evil, became for the Romantics an irresistible link with the world of the demonic, where ghosts and other phantoms were seen as emanations of the character's own sub-conscious. The focus rests upon the character and the murky depths of his mind that can be lured into the irrational. As Marcel Schneider has pointed out in his study of French fantastic literature, borders between the natural and the supernatural become permeable:[4] the ghost does not stand as a separate entity but is seen through the prism of the character's mind.

One look at Hector's shade as it appears in Les Troyens suffices in determining that this psychological interpretation hinted at by Renaissance and Romantic drama is missing. By drawing heavily upon the text of Virgil Berlioz succeeded in conjuring up a shade that behaves in accordance with the views of the supernatural from antiquity. In the pre-Christian era there existed the belief that the spirits of the departed ones lived on in the tomb

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[4] Marcel Schneider, La Littérature fantastique en France (Paris: Fayard, 1964), p. 118.

with the body; later, with the practice of cremation, the souls were assigned an abode in the centre of the earth. In any event, death did not establish an impassable boundary between the dead and the living. There was intercourse with the dead in ancient Greece and Italy, in the sense that they were invited back in spirit to visit their mortal abode on several specific occasions during the year. And the general belief was shared that the souls of the dead hovered over the activities of the living since they had no afterlife of their own to look forward to.[8] This explained their intervention in the ways of the living: from their vantage point of observation they sought out opportunities to share their wisdom with mortals in the form of advice or of warning by becoming visible in a vision. The mortals accepted this form of intervention in their lives as a very natural occurrence; Virgil, of course, adhered to the Homeric convention of depicting the gods and goddesses in interaction with earthly beings.

Énée's reaction to Hector's shade in Les Troyens is not one of terror. He is described by Berlioz as experiencing a moment of irresolution ("un instant d'indécision"), but without further ado he addresses the spectre. His later response to the message of the ghost shows more involvement. Berlioz outlined in the libretto the way Hector withdraws from front stage and how Énée watches him awestruck: ". . .

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[8] Such beliefs surrounding the topic of ghosts in ancient Greece and Rome is discussed by Collison-Morley in his book, Greek and Roman Ghost Stories (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1912), pp. 1-6.

Énée le suit d'un regard effaré," (2a : 218).

Énée maintains in this operatic scene an objective and respectful distance to the appearance of Hector's ghost. The immortal apparition does not make any subjective appeal to the inner workings of Énée's own mind. He is presented with information as to the disintegration of Troy and with a prophecy of his role in establishing a new Troy across the seas. There is no suggestion of evil: the shade is accepted as representing good-will and a common interest in the Trojan destiny. The whole encounter is presented in a classical light, and Énée shows no signs of being obsessed with the irrational. Rather than terror for himself he feels pity for the shade as he questions the nature of his immortal abode and the cause of the sorrow upon his face.

With regards to Virgil it is important to establish the nature of Hector's appearance as a vision: the emphasis is on its functional role for the fate of Troy rather than offering any explanation of the relationship between Aeneas and the former Hector. The passage in the Aeneid begins "in somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector" (II, 270). It is assumed that Aeneas remains asleep and in flashback tells of Hector's appearance as if it were a dream, using verbs of apparent perception with "there seemed to stand" and later in this same passage, "I myself seemed then to weep," etc.:

> . . . ultro flens ipse videbar
> compellare virum et maestas expromere voces:
> (II, 279-80).

What occurs as a vision in the Aeneid necessitated a different medium of presentation for the operatic stage. Drama in general cannot portray the inner workings of a character's mind in the form of a dream or vision. This is borne out by the literary output of those writers in the early twentieth century who pursued the concept of stream-of-consciousness: the results were almost exclusively narrative. The one attempt by Eugene O'Neill to produce a stage play in this vein (cf. The Strange Interlude) is not considered to be very successful. A vision stimulates a deeper level of consciousness than that represented by verbalization. Erwin R. Steinberg refers to reaching beneath the speech level with the stream-of-consciousness technique in order to attain a pre-speech, non-verbalized stratum where ideas surface spontaneously without the intervention of the logic that characterizes verbal expression.[4] Berlioz chose to depict the vision dramatically whereby the shade of Hector receives concrete, physical expression on the stage, just as the whole operatic and theatrical tradition before him has done. Hector, as he becomes visible to the mind's eye of Aeneas, takes the form of a shade or spectre, visible to the audience as well.

The transition from the narrative mode to the dramatic is first shown in the way Berlioz had to include a description of physical setting in the libretto. Aeneas'

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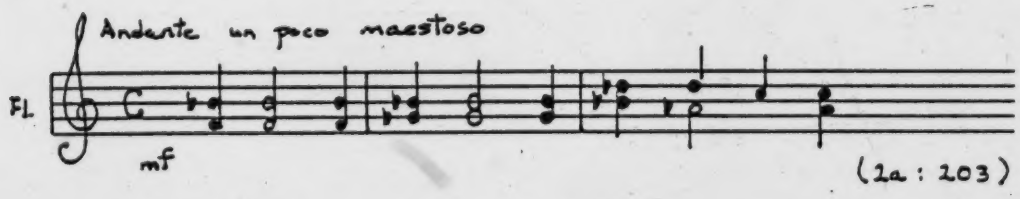
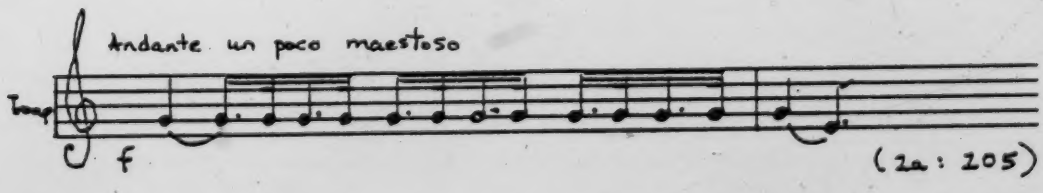
[4] Erwin R. Steinberg, The Stream of Consciousness and Beyond in Ulysses (New York: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), p. 6.

mind is no longer the framework within which the details of the vision will be unravelled. In Les Troyens Énée's sleeping quarters are presented with distant noises of battle forming an auditory backdrop. From the very first bars of music Berlioz created an atmosphere of tension through the confrontation of two contrasting musical ideas. The woodwind section establishes the slow heavy beat in keeping with the tempo indication, "Andante un poco maestoso":



To this is added the running-note passages from the lower strings which gradually build to the general outburst from the whole orchestra of the A major chord, played in descending inversions before modulating to B minor. This contributes to the duality that Berlioz tried to promote from the beginning of the opera in terms of thematic presentation and in musical setting (cf. chapter six on dramatic irony and Cassandre).

A third idea to be introduced into this opening number is the military-like battle call played by the trumpets:



This symbolizes, of course, the fighting going on in the

Trojan city as Énée lies sleeping.

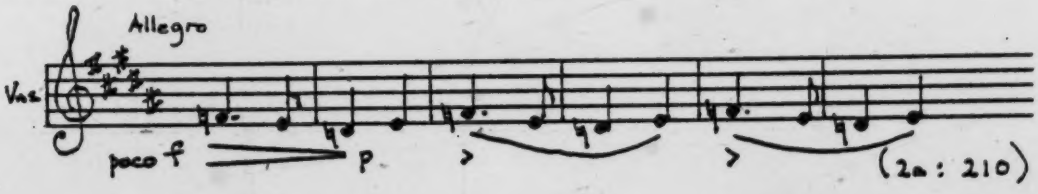
The jerky rhythm of the trumpet call leads to a sequential repetition of the opening theme, starting a semitone higher. Such repetition creates necessary tension and suspense for the audience, and it is only after the second rendering of the trumpet figure and a third resounding climatic chord that the curtains are raised on the nocturnal setting.

The first instance of action in this second act presents Ascagne, son of Énée, who comes on stage, hesitantly approaches his sleeping father, then slips out. This was an invention of Berlioz that does not form any part of the appearance of Hector in the Aeneid. It would seem to serve a dual purpose in the opera. In a very functional way Ascagne assures the audience of Énée's sleeping state, since Énée shows absolutely no cognizance of his son's brief visit. This oblivion to the reality of his own youthful son throws the awakening of Énée to the shade of Hector into even sharper relief. As well it hints at what would appear to be the second reason why Berlioz introduced Ascagne into this scene: in order to support the cyclic theme of the generations which comes out so strongly in the Aeneid. Virgil allowed the wife of Aeneas, Creusa, to fall by the wayside; but the sack of Troy in the Aeneid is climaxed by the image of Aeneas, carrying his father Ascanius on his back and leading his young son by the hand as they escape. Ideas that are unveiled gradually in epic form must often be

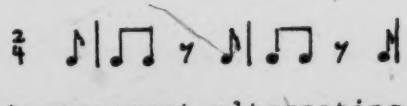
presented in opera more directly at the outset. Unlike words, musical sounds do not have the same narrative capacity of linear development.

The opening Andante of Number Twelve switches to an Allegro in 2/4 time in order to characterize Ascagne's hasty appearance on stage. The melody line, carried at the quicker tempo by the flutes and supported by the clarinets, features a slurred-note rising pattern of sixteenth notes that move by single steps:

The lightness of the musical mood is suggestive of the youthful Ascagne who enters to tread gingerly toward his father's bed; the tied eighth note conveys his hesitation. Though alarmed by the fighting he does not dare to awaken his father. This moment of irresolution is rendered by the orchestra, repeating a wavering phrase three times:

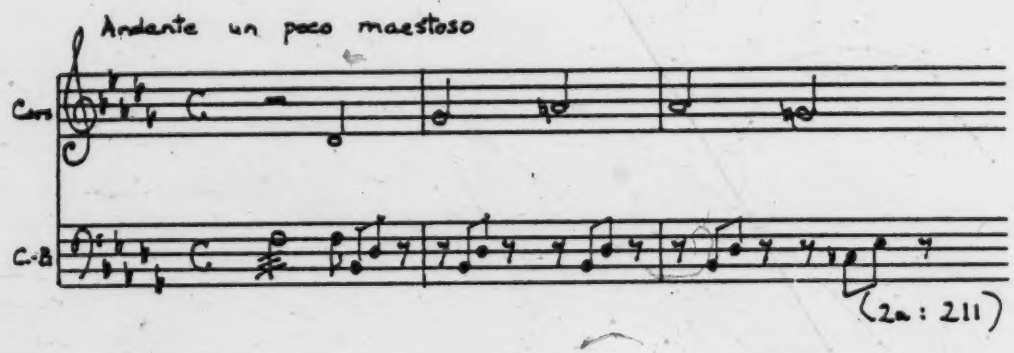


The whole string section then accompanies Ascagne's exit from the stage with a rhythmic pattern of repeated eighth notes broken by a rest--

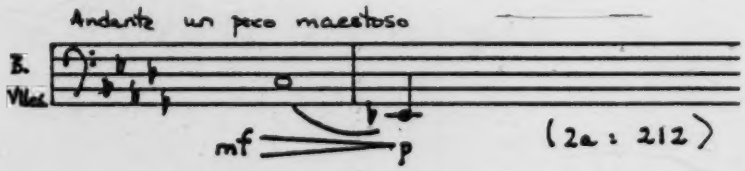


etc., which suggests movement alternating with hesitation.

A tremolo on the note F from the double basses marks a transition from the scene with Ascagne to the more foreboding key of B flat minor and the entrance of Hector's shade. His slow progression across the stage to Énée's bedside corresponds to a thirteen-bar Andante passage with the indication, "un poco maestoso." A slow beat is maintained by the distant melody of muted horns playing half notes with the cello and double bass filling in pizzicato notes that build tension and suggest slow movement:



As the spectre arrives at Énée's bedside the orchestra concludes this passage with isolated notes set off by rests to suggest the halting of motion. In the libretto Berlioz indicated that the bloodstained shade sighs deeply, ("soupire profondément") which is interpreted musically by the bassoon entry--



--a typical instance of tone painting.

After an extended pause the whole orchestra entones a dramatic crashing chord of E flat minor meant to signify an extra loud intrusion of battle sounds; with the B flat (the fifth of the chord) in the bass, the chord lacks stability. This is what awakens Énée. His reaction to seeing the ghost is rendered by a descending and ascending string passage of chromatic sixteenth notes. It is curious that Berlioz depicted Énée at this point as experiencing a moment of irresolution ("un instant d'indécision"). There is no hint of any wavering in Virgil's depiction of the vision. Perhaps "hésitation" would have been a better choice of word:[7] there is really no choice to be made by the classical hero. His fate has been decided for him, and will now be revealed to him by the immortal apparition.

Énée is thus depicted in the opera, Les Troyens, as being fully awake to receive the message from Hector's shade. Berlioz followed the text of Virgil rather closely in the way Aeneas addresses Hector:

> 'O lux Dardaniae, spes o fidissima Teucrum,
> quae tantae tenuere morae? quibus Hector ab oris
> expectate venis? ut te post multa tuorum
> funera, post varios hominumque urbisque labores
> defessi aspicimus! quae causa indigna serenos
> foedavit voltus? aut cur haec volnera cerno?'
> (II, 281-86).

From these four questions in the Latin text, Berlioz derived a French text that poses three questions concerning the

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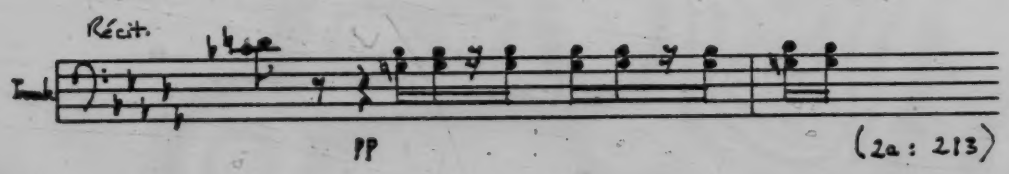
[7] Tzvetan Todorov characterizes the fantastic as ". . . that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" in his work, The Fantastic (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), p. 25.

immortal habitat of the spectre and the nature of the sorrows that show upon his face:

> Ô lumière de Troie! . . . Ô gloire des Troyens!
> Après tant de labeurs de tes concitoyens,
> De quels bords inconnus reviens-tu? Quel nuage
> Semble voiler tes yeux sereins?
> Hector, quelles douleurs ont flétri ton visage?
> (2a : 213-214).

This recitative passage is preceded by a trombone entry that features the same rhythmic pattern that accompanied Ascagne's exit from the stage. This time, however, with the change to sixteenth notes and to the more declamatory timbre of the trombones instead of the strings, a certain menacing tone and a sense of urgency is expressed:



Énée's first two phrases are preceded by a double-forte, diminished seventh chord played by the string section which then draws swiftly back to repeat the chord at a double piano sound.* The effect is startling in this setting and offers immediate contrast to the subdued voice of Énée, a tenor, as he begins his recitative:

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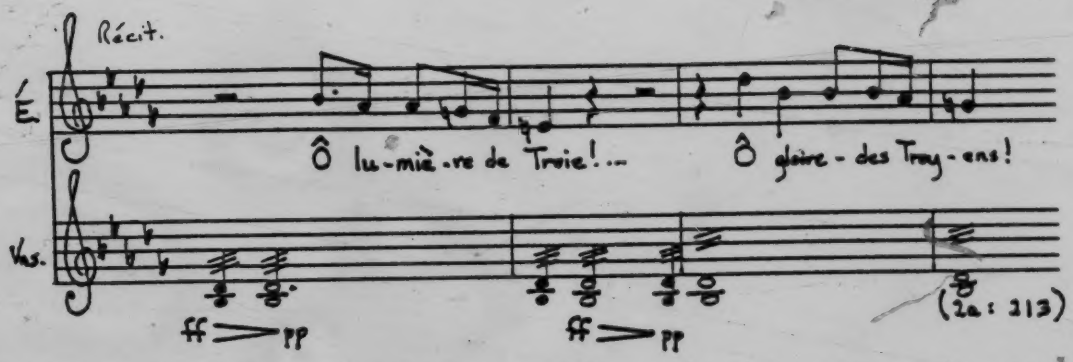
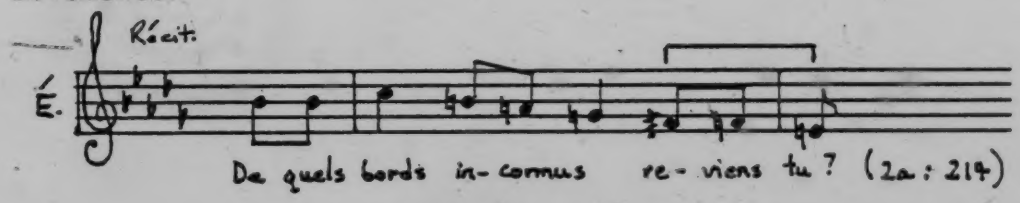
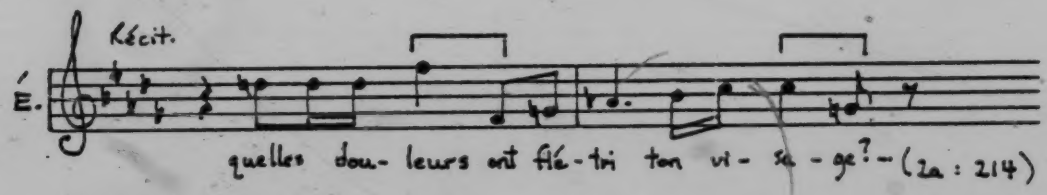
* This is the same chord from Act One on which Cassandre shrieks "Troie"; such a musical echo continues the thread of dramatic irony running throughout the opera.



The falling line of these opening phrases portrays the submissive attitude of wonderment and respect with which Énée addresses the fallen hero of the Trojan people. He goes on to express deep human sympathy for his suffering in a musical phrase where warmth is expressed through chromatic movement:



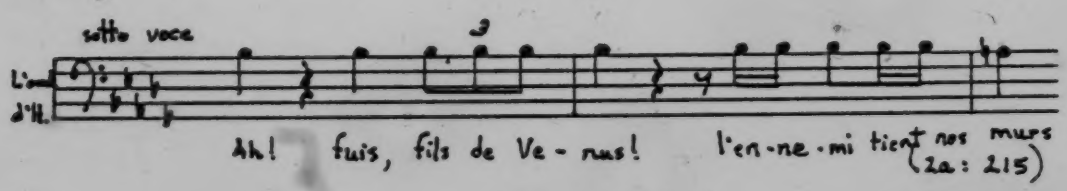
Finally, he sings a line of recitative that centres around the word "douleur" on a high F which is then echoed an octave lower:



The drop of a fourth from C to G on the second syllable of "vi-sage" serves as a cadence and leaves the stress on the sympathy being expressed rather than on questions that expect to be answered.

For, in fact, the shade of Hector will not answer these questions addressed to him regarding the origin of his immortal wanderings or the nature of his personal suffering. This is in keeping with traditional folklore which often allows no talk of life beyond the grave. Virgil adhered to this as well with the line: "Ille nihil. nec me quaerentem vana moratur" (II, 187).

For the speech of Hector's shade, Berlioz again stuck closely to the Virgilian text. Hector's first line according to Virgil, is as follows: "'Heu fuge, nate dea, teque his'ait 'eripe flammis" (II, 189). In the opera, Les Troyens, a fermata separates the questioning recitative of Énée from the words of the spectre who enters, sotto voce, on a B flat with the exclamation "Ah!" and the command to flee:



Berlioz filled out the Latin text by specifying the goddess as Venus and completed the first line with a declaration of the state of affairs within the falling Trojan city: "l'ennemi tient nos murs!" This is contained in the second line of the Latin text--"Hostis habet muros, . . ." The image of flames from the first line of Virgil's text is used by Berlioz in the third and fourth lines of the libretto text: "Un ouragan de flammes roule / Des temples aux palais ses tourbillons impurs . . ." As in the Aeneid, Berlioz then

continued with the notion that the rulers of Troy, such as Hector and Énée, have done all that was possible to save Pergamus, citadel of Troy and symbol for the whole city. Hector, according to Virgil, then lays the trust of Troy on Aeneas' shoulders to convey the holy things and household gods across the seas where a new Trojan settlement is to founded. Berlioz mentioned the gods as well, but first brought in the children of Troy as instrumental in transferring the Trojan kingdom:

> . . . Pergame te confie
> Ses enfants et ses Dieux. Va. . ., cherche
> l'Italie. . .
>
> (2a : 217).

This is the second instance where Berlioz reinforced the idea of the younger generation, the first being the appearance of Ascagne in Énée's sleeping chamber. Berlioz was seeking to establish the theme of posterity which is allowed to develop gradually over the course of Virgil's epic, relying upon narrative means of exposition, variation and intensification. According to David Cairns, ". . . Aeneas' heroic role and his consciousness of his destiny as a hero have to be spelled out; the point must be established quickly--it cannot be left to the cumulative effect of epic verse."[9]

For this reason Berlioz included in Hector's recitative the naming of Italy as the destination of Énée in founding a new empire for the Trojans. In the Aeneid, it is Aeneas' wife, Creusa, who first pronounces the name of the new

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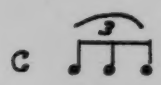
[9] David Cairns, Responses, p. 100.

homeland; she announces to Aeneas in a vision, after becoming lost as they escaped, "Et terram Hesperiam venies, . . ." (II, 781). But Creusa is a character who does not surface in Les Troyens. By placing this information in Hector's speech, Berlioz established a connection with the theme of destiny which he was then able to use as a leitmotif throughout the opera. At the end of Act Two, conclusion to the Trojan scenes, Cassandre and her female adherents utter "Italie!" as they fall in suicide, victims to the folly of the Trojan citizens who have let in the wooden horse and the Greek forces, causing their annihilation.

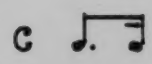
Furthermore, Berlioz went farther than Virgil in having Hector sing of Énée's death in Italy. The prophecy of Aeneas' early death occurs in the Aeneid by gradual stages. It first takes the form of a curse from Dido's lips as she struggles with Aeneas' abandonment of her: "sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena" (IV, 620). In Book Six, it is more directly stated by Anchises, father of Aeneas, who escorts Aeneas through the pageantry of Roman history, past and future, in the Underworld and warns him of his harsh fate: "Heu miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas" (VI, 882). Such epic progression towards the ultimate disclosure of tragedy must be handled differently in opera. A "grand opéra" like Les Troyens is built upon a more confined sense of the tragic; it proceeds from an established situation of tragedy that inspires the musical ideas to follow. Thus,

Berlioz stated the necessary thematic components early in the opera: they then are part of the crystallized state of emotion which acts as a base from which the musical development of sounds takes off.

Berlioz found a very effective musical vehicle for portraying the appearance of Hector's shade on the operatic stage. The bass voice enters, as shown above, with a soft, but explosive "Ah!" on a high B flat, the tonic note. The recitative selection then proceeds to descend phrase by phrase at a restrained tempo through the chromatic scale to the lower B flat. Each line of verse is entoned on the single note before dropping to the semitone below by the end of the line. Rhythmical interest is achieved by using various figures to imitate the natural flow of the words: triplet,



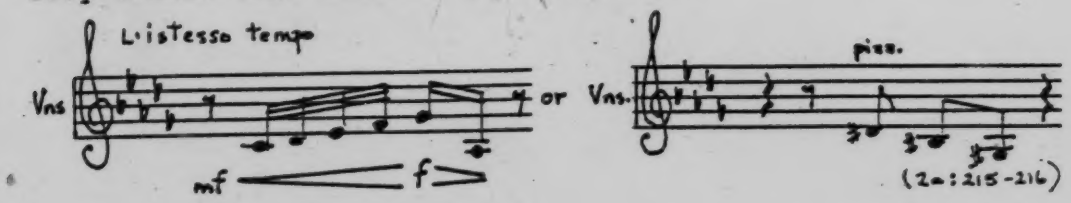
,dotted-eighth note,



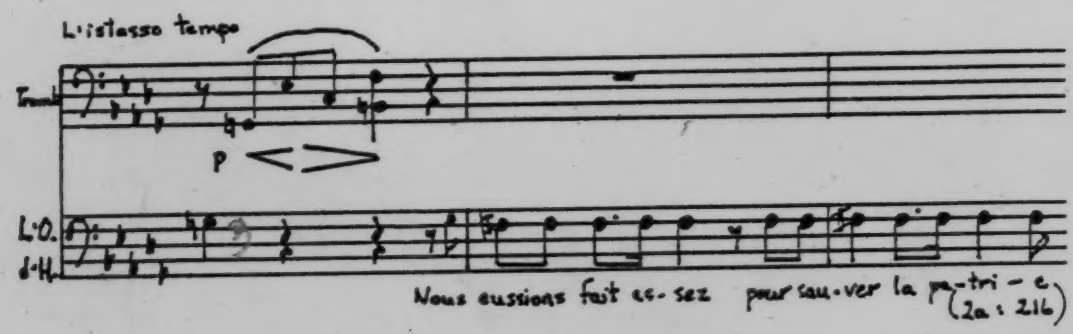
, or a combination of varying note values, such as

, in true recitative style. Because the bass voice sings largely unaccompanied--except for muted pp chords from the cello and double bass, marked "con sordino"--the effect is that of an other-worldly sound coming from out of the depths. The horns are also very effectively used. The interjections from the higher string instruments are more

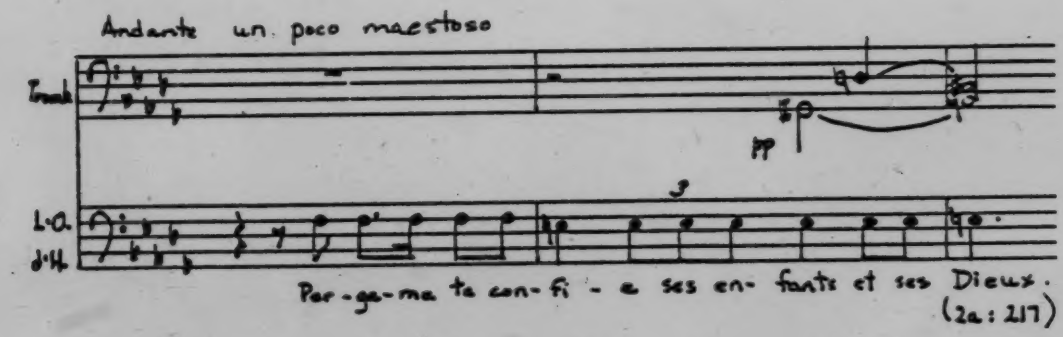
pronounced than the lower string entries; but because of their higher register and change of pace they do not so much accompany the shade's voice as offer a reflection of the eery unease that Énée is experiencing:



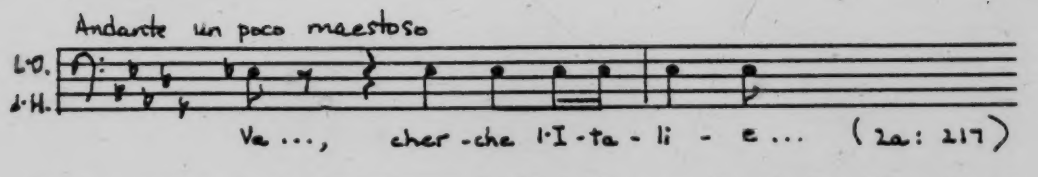
An interjection from the trombones seems to lead to the shade's singing of "la patrie"--



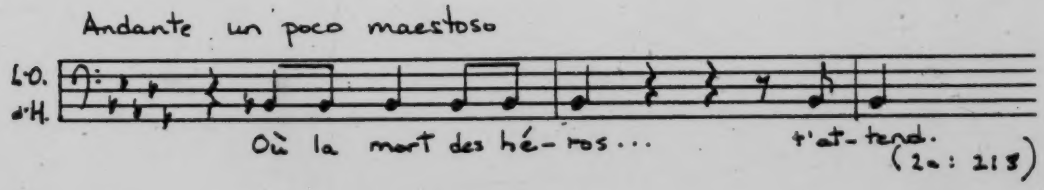
and contributes a few bars later to a slight accumulation of tension in this downward moving melody as Hector proclaims Énée's role for the future of Troy:



The actual pronouncement of Italy as the new Trojan destination is emphasized by a rest following the word "Va":



As Hector reaches the lower B flat he prophesizes the death of Énée:



This descent in pitch is marked by a decrease in volume and parallels the withdrawal of the spectre from the stage, so that the final words, "t'attend," are barely audible. The orchestra now reverts back to the pizzicato accompaniment which escorted the shade across the stage to Énée's bedside. This adds both a visual and auditory symmetry to the scene.

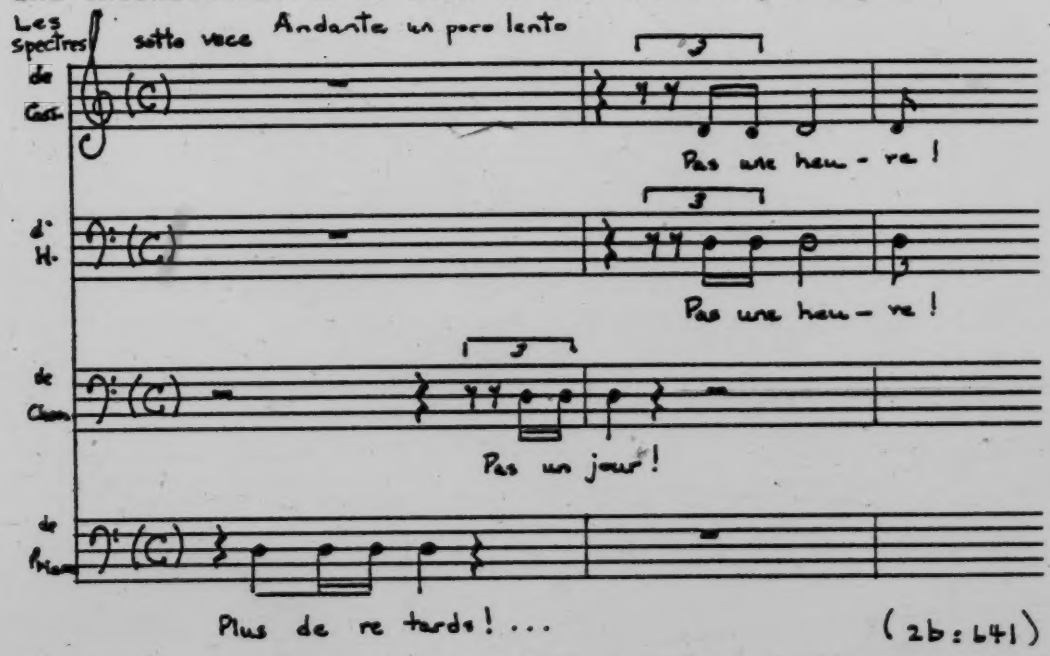
Berlioz again introduced the concept of the supernatural into the final act of the opera where it is used dramatically to bridge the gap from the emotional peak of the love duo in Act Four to the tragic ending required in Act Five. Act Four has concluded with the intervention of the god, Mercury, singing "Italie!" three times as he disturbs the ecstasy of Dido and Énée. Mercury also reminds Aeneas of his destiny to move on from Carthage in the Aeneid. But in Act Five Berlioz extended this intervention of the god to a reappearance of ghost-like figures. First in scene number thirty-nine, sung by Panthée and the chieftains, reference is made to Hector and a chorus of

shades who have been seen and heard to cry out three times "Italie!" This occurrence would serve to qualify the objective nature of Berlioz's apparitions since they have been observed by others--not just Énée.

But when the chorus of shades make an appearance in scene number forty-two with Énée, there is a subjective quality to the encounter that betrays the Romantic fusion of the natural and supernatural: this scene is not from Virgil but was a figment of Berlioz's own imagination. First of all, the shades speak out uninvited as they entone Énée's name, "Énée!" Énée's response, "Encor ces voix!" establishes a note of irritation that belies his foreknowledge and existing awareness of them. They do not bring fresh information to him but only a reminder to get on with what he has already been told. When he questions their motive, the ghost of Priam reminds him of his present lapse in duty and the path of glory that lies ahead of him: "Ta faiblesse et ta gloire. . ." Énée answers with "Ah! je voudrais mourir!" which reflects the personal state of his feelings of guilt, but is un-Virgilian in character. Berlioz was using the supernatural here to fill the puzzling gap in Virgil, left by the manner in which Aeneas so hastily departs from Carthage without taking proper leave of Dido. This operatic scene with the shades offers transition over the awkward interval imposed by the need on Énée's part to subdue all personal commitments in order to serve as a public instrument in the founding of a new Trojan

settlement.

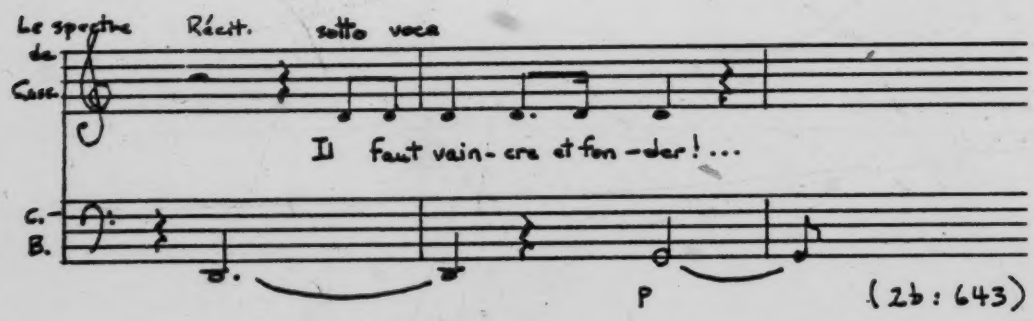
The scene evolves with wonderful dramatic effectiveness, both visually and musically. The four ghosts that make up the chorus of shades are placed at various positions on the stage to become visible at varying points: Priam on the left, Chorèbe on the right, and Cassandre and Hector at the back. All singing by the spectres is on the monotone of D which gives a surrealistic quality to their performance. Berlioz built upon the principle of repetition and intensification as seen in the following example:



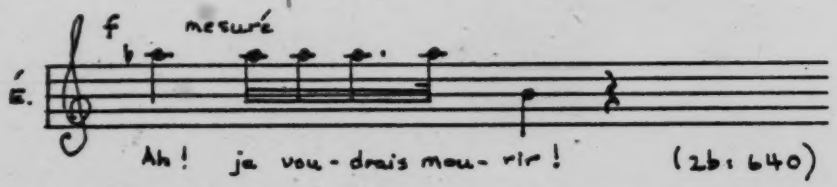
(2b:641)

Priam then commands Énée to live and depart: "il faut vivre et partir," before he disappears. Chorèbe continues the progression by adding the image of conquering: "Il faut partir et vaincre!" These entries are accompanied by a low D from the double basses and by occasional string arpeggios on the diminished seventh chord. When Cassandre and Hector

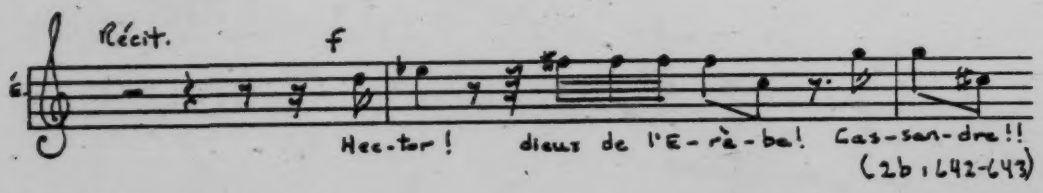
conclude this sequence with the command to found a new settlement ("Il faut vaincre et fonder!"), a culminating resolution to the G major chord takes place on the word "fonder":



In contrast to the sotto voce voices of the shades, Énée sings in high-pitched, forte outbursts:



This jump from A flat to B features the interval of the diminished seventh. A somewhat phrenetic nature is conveyed by the tendency towards dissonance:



This passage would imply a disturbed state of mind that was not evident in Énée's initial reaction to the appearance of Hector. Énée's feelings of inner conflict have been intensified and complicated because of Dido and their love. Berlioz on his own came up with a more subjective--i.e.

Romantic--use of the supernatural than is evident in the first tableau of Act Two where he remained more closely tied to the Virgilian text and to the Virgilian spirit. This development is reflected in his use of "ombre" for Hector in Act Two, but the title "spectre" for the apparitions of Act Five. In both instances the orchestral accompaniment portrays the supernatural in traditional fashion with dark, sombre tones and timbres. In addition, a monotonous, recitative style is used for the spectres to emphasize their colourless existence beyond the grave. Their appearance is effective in a theatrical sense, but they are also strongly indicative of further plot development.

CHAPTER 9

The Principle of Continuity

In order to understand Berlioz's principle of continuity in Les Troyens--i.e., the way he chose to join one operatic moment to the next--we must again examine his expressed intention to create ". . . un grand opéra traité dans le système shakespearien, dont le deuxième et le quatrième livre de l'Enéide seraient le sujet."[1] This statement makes a clear distinction between the subject matter of the opera, and the form in which it will be presented. Such reference to the dramatic method of Shakespeare, ("le système shakespearien"), suggests an understanding of the English playwright that stems from the 1820's in France. C. M. Haines discusses this period in his book, Shakespeare in France, and Augustus Ralli touches upon it in his general work, A History of Shakespearian Criticism.

Previous to this, the French had been slow to detect any system behind the Shakespearian banquet of diverse characters and colourful language. What struck the French most was Shakespeare's disrespect for the three unities, the backbone of French classical tragedy. Also uppermost in their minds was the obvious breach in decorum resulting from

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[1] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 469.

the presentation of dubious types, (e.g., the gravediggers in Hamlet), of horrific actions, such as Othello smothering Desdomona, and of unorthodox language imagery. There is the classic example of criticism expressed by Voltaire in a letter from 1776 to the "Académie Française." Voltaire, with reference to Letourneur's recent prose translation of Shakespearian works, Oeuvres de Shakespeare, made specific reference to the guard's reply in Hamlet of "Not a mouse stirring"(I,i): "Oui, monsieur, un soldat peut répondre ainsi dans un corps de garde; mais non pas sur le théâtre, devant les premières personnes d'une nation, qui s'expriment noblement, et devant qui il faut s'exprimer de même."[2] Voltaire's rejection of this mélange of class and of genre was typical of the reception of Shakespeare's dramas in France in the late eighteenth century.

In 1800 Madame de Staël wrote a book entitled De la Littérature in which she included her distinction between the literature of the north and that of the south, as well as a separate chapter on the tragedies of Shakespeare. Her work ushered in a new period of Shakespearian criticism in France: she obviously appreciated the genius of Shakespeare although she felt his appeal was limited by its English peculiarities. Where Voltaire had dwelt upon the faults of Shakespeare as a playwright, Mme de Staël was willing to discuss his beauties. She considered him a master of portraying pity and terror, the two great essentials of

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[2] Voltaire, Oeuvres Complètes, Vol 30 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1880), p. 363.

tragedy. Compared to the ancient Greek tragedies, Shakespeare's works are extolled as superior in their expression of human passion: "Ses pièces sont supérieures aux tragédies grecques, pour la philosophie des passions et la connaissance des hommes, . . ." But Mme de Staël continued with her claim that Shakespeare is inferior to the Greek tragedians in the area of dramatic art. The combination of comic and tragic scenes was to her an absurd way to achieve contrast and an undesirable mark of the influence of popular English taste.

Châteaubriand, the following year, wrote an essay, "Shakspere ou Shakspeare", in which he first delineated different areas of his critical approach. He considered Shakespeare first in the context of the Renaissance, second, from the point of view of his poetic genius, and finally, under the heading of his dramatic art. In this last section Châteaubriand characterized the style of Shakespeare as a dramatist through the disorder or confusion that he causes to reign upon the stage--in other words, the lack of a dramatic system from the point of view of French classical theatre. He did admit the possibility of mixing comic and tragic tones, an idea that was then slowly accepted by French critics.

In a second book, De l'Allemagne, of 1810, which was heavily indebted to the brothers Schlegel, Mme de Staël persisted in her attack on the system of French tragedy.[3]

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[3] In 1808 August Wilhelm Schlegel gave a series of lectures in Vienna on dramatic literature with which Mme de

She now called for a rejection of the neo-classical principle of the three unities, (except for the unity of action); theatrical illusion must be based upon other principles. And she acknowledged the possibility of a different literature (i.e., the English) producing a different dramatic system. A spirit of reform was gradually taking root that would recognize the exhausted state of French classical tragedy and the need to benefit from foreign influences. It was another critic, N. L. Lemercier, who in an article of 1817, "Cours Analytique de Littérature Générale," cited the advantages of relaxing the unity of time as witnessed in Macbeth. The various tenets of neo-classism would continue to crumble.

The most important event for the discovery of "le système shakespearien" was François Guizot's essay of 1821, "Shakespeare et son temps." This essay offered a brilliant exposé on the dramatic art of Shakespeare and was attached to the revised edition of Letourneur's translation which Guizot had produced in collaboration with de Barante and Amedée Pichot. With this essay Guizot became the first French critic to truly perceive the dramatic system behind Shakespeare's play. In the place of respect for the three unities, Guizot drew attention to the unity of impression that binds a Shakespearian drama together: "L'unité d'impression, ce premier secret de l'art dramatique, a été

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[3](cont'd) Staël was familiar; her cousin, Mme Necker de Saussure, translated the lectures into French under the title, Cours de littérature dramatique, and had it published in 1814.

l'âme des grandes conceptions de Shakspeare et l'objet instinctif de son travail assidu, comme elle est le but de toutes les règles inventées par tous les systèmes."[4] This unity of impression is achieved through a progression of dramatic moments that bring very diversified material to the stage yet still contribute to the overall theme being enacted. On this point Guizot compared the dramatist to the painter, who need only evoke an initial, lasting impression:

> Il a suffi au peintre d'établir, entre le personnage et le spectateur, un premier rapport qui ne varie plus. Il faut que le poëte dramatique renoue sans cesse cette relation, qu'il la maintienne à travers les vicissitudes de situations diverses.[5]

With this, Guizot opened up the area of the relationship between the dramatic work and its audience. The strength of an impression would be judged by how unequivocally it affects the spectators, and must be communicated not by the dramatist directly, but by his characters. The onus of dramatic presentation switches to characterization, and to the ensuing need to portray more vital, realistic types. Mme de Staël had already given Shakespeare credit twenty years earlier for his portrayal of great men through their purely natural sentiments: ". . . ce n'est pas au grand homme, c'est à l'homme que l'on s'intéresse; l'on n'est point alors ému par des sentiments qui sont quelquefois de convention tragique, mais par une impression tellement rapprochée des impressions de la vie, que l'illusion en est plus

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[4] François Guizot, Shakespeare et son temps (Paris: Didier, 1858), p. 152.

[5] Ibid., p. 141.

grande."[6]

For Stendhal, writing a pamphlet entitled "Racine et Shakespeare" in 1823, the question of unity of impression became a matter of creating moments of complete illusion. In his first chapter, "Pour faire des tragédies qui puissent intéresser le public en 1823, faut-il suivre les errements de Racine ou ceux de Shakespeare?", Stendhal brought forward these brief moments of illusion as the basis of finding pleasure in tragedy:

> Tout le plaisir que l'on trouve au spectacle tragique dépend de la fréquence de ces petits moments d'illusion, et de l'état d'émotion où, dans leurs intervalles, ils laissent l'âme du spectateur.[7]

Stendhal suggested that these moments of perfect illusion occur more frequently in Shakespeare's dramas than in Racine's.

The title, quoted above for Stendhal's first chapter, typifies the quarrel that was then raging between the classicists and the romanticists in France. Unfortunately, the first attempt by a troupe of English actors to stage some plays of Shakespeare in 1822 was caught in the midst of this battle of aesthetics. To make matters worse the troupe were introduced as servants of his Britannic majesty which stirred up the ever-smoldering political rivalry between France and Britain. The French audience reacted so violently

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[6] Madame de Staël, De la Littérature. ed. Paul van Tieghem. (Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1959), 1:196.

[7] Stendhal, Racine et Shakespeare (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1970), p. 60.

to the premiere of Othello, then considered the most barbaric of Shakespeare's plays, that the performers had to withdraw from the stage under the onslaught of flying eggs, vegetables, coins and, last but not least, verbal abuse.[1] This reaction was not due so much to the actual art of Shakespeare as to external associations clinging to his name.

By 1827 the struggle between the classicists and romanticists had subsided into a far-reaching acceptance of Shakespeare and the dramatic methods he represented. The French audience was in a much more receptive frame of mind when the famous English troupe of 1827, with Harriet Smithson in their midst, performed Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet and Othello on the successive nights of September eleventh, fifteenth and eighteenth. These actors were instrumental in conveying the naturalness that was inherent in Shakespeare's style. Harriet Smithson, as Ophelia, Juliet and Desdemona, became idolized by the Parisian public for the intensity of emotion she was able to transmit despite the fact that the actual meaning of the words was lost to most of the audience. Berlioz himself bemoaned the fact of having to depend on Letourneur's translation:

> Il faut ajouter que je ne savais pas alors un seul mot d'anglais, que je n'entrevoyais Shakespeare qu'à travers les brouillards de la traduction de Letourneur, et que je n'apercevais point, en conséquence, la trame poétique qui enveloppe comme

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[1] The performances of these visiting English troupes are described in detail in Peter Raby's biography of Harriet Smithson, Fair Ophelia.

un réseau d'or ses merveilleuses créations.'

In any event, "le système shakespearien" had come to represent a more flexible approach toward the composition of dramatic works but, as well, the means of achieving a greater realism and intensity of impression. Alfred de Vigny, in his "Lettre à Lord ***" which prefaced his translation of Othello in 1829, was reminded of the Greek origin of the word, "système": "'Système'

(Σύσημα, de συν ἵσημι)

signifie par sa racine . . . enchaînement de principes et de conséquences composant une doctrine, un dogme."'[10] Vigny hoped to show the necessity for French dramatic reform to pursue an ideal of organic growth rather than blind adherence to any rigid system.

Flexibility is also the key toward understanding Berlioz's conception of Shakespeare's dramatic method. By his own avowal it was the power of acting that made the most drastic impression on him 1827:

> Mais le jeu des acteurs, celui de l'actrice surtout, la succession des scènes, la pantomime et l'accent des voix signifiaient pour moi davantage et m'imprégnaient des idées et des passions shakespeariennes mille fois plus que les mots de ma pâle et infidèle traduction.''

' H. Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 67.

'[10] Vigny, Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. Fernand Baldensperger. (Paris: Louis Conard, 1926), p. xix. This letter bore the sub-heading "sur la Soirée du 24 Octobre 1829 et sur un système dramatique."

'' H. Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 67.

From this precipitous reaction to Shakespeare's plays Berlioz would evolve his own understanding of "le système shakespearien" which could be superimposed onto his operatic material. Of relevance to the form of his libretto and score was his awareness of "la succession des scènes" which seems to have found an echo in his own principles of operatic continuity. Berlioz appreciated the flow of scenes from Shakespeare that contributed toward a unified impression, this impression dictating the choice of material rather than adherence to any artificial unities. That Berlioz's opera, Les Troyens, enjoys the dual setting of Troy and Carthage, in disregard of the unities of time and place, can be justified by his Virgilian source. More significant is the way Berlioz tried to free nineteenth-century opera from artificial restrictions on composition, which paralleled the romanticist's striving to evolve a freer, more dynamic form of French tragedy.

As well, Berlioz's ideas on continuity stemmed from his early esteem for Gluck's priciples of operatic reform. The life and works of Gluck have been treated by A. B. Marx in an early volume of 1863, followed in this century by the works of J.-G. Prod'homme and Ernest Newman. Patricia Howard deals more specifically with Gluck's ideas of reforming opera and notes his stress on continuity: "His main musical contribution to opera is the continuity which enables the pace of the sung drama to approach more closely that of the

spoken script."[12] Gluck held the true function of operatic music to be the accompaniment of a storyline. And he strongly criticized the abuses in early nineteenth-century opera which featured exaggerated musical embellishment--included to satisfy the vanity of some aspiring soprano or tenor--to the absolute detriment of the dramatic impression being created. Berlioz discussed "le système de Gluck" in his work, À travers chants, which features various essays and criticisms about the operas of Gluck. From the preface to his opera, Alceste, Gluck is quoted as saying

> Lorsque j'entrepris . . . de mettre en musique l'opéra d'Alceste, je me proposai d'éviter tous les abus que la vanité mal entendue des chanteurs et l'excessive complaisance des compositeurs avaient introduits dans l'opéra italien, et qui du plus pompeux et du plus beau de tous les spectacles en avaient fait le plus ennuyeux et le plus ridicule; je cherchai à réduire la musique à sa véritable fonction, celle de seconder la poésie pour fortifier l'expression des sentiments et l'intérêt des situations sans interrompre l'action et la refroidir par des ornements superflus; . . . [13]

This "système" of Gluck dictated various principles for the composition of the libretto: the appropriate positioning of ritornellos so as not to interrupt the dramatic outpouring of a singer, the suppression of melisma which refers to the drawing out of one word syllable to a melodic phrase, and in general, the attempt to achieve a more direct and

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[12] P. Howard, Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1963), p. 104.

[13] H. Berlioz, À travers chants, ed. Léon Guichard (Paris: Grund, 1971), p. 173.

responsible relationship between the words and the music. An important point for Berlioz was Gluck's proposal to ". . . éviter de laisser dans le dialogue une disparate trop tranchante entre l'air et le récitatif, . . ."[14] Though aware of the discrepancy between Gluck's theory and practice, Berlioz took up this challenge to pass smoothly from air to recitative in the fourth act of Les Troyens with numbers thirty-five, thirty-six and thirty-seven. Number thirty-five is entitled "Récitatif et Quintette," number thirty-six, "Récitatif et Septuor," and finally the "Duo" of number thirty-seven which features an adaptation from the love scene of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, Act Five.

With these three numbers Berlioz created in Les Troyens a smoothly flowing progression of ensemble work joined by a minimum of recitative. The theme of the whole progression is love; and with the sequence of quintet, septet and duet Berlioz was able to present varying aspects of the love complex. The two recitatives, preceding numbers thirty-five and thirty-six, serve the function of introducing the ensemble to follow, through explanatory material that sets the scene for reflection on a crystalized state of emotion--the work of ensemble music.

The theme of love has been aptly prepared by the "Chasse Royale et Orage" which forms the opening tableau of Act Four. In fact, the whole of Act Four can be said to be

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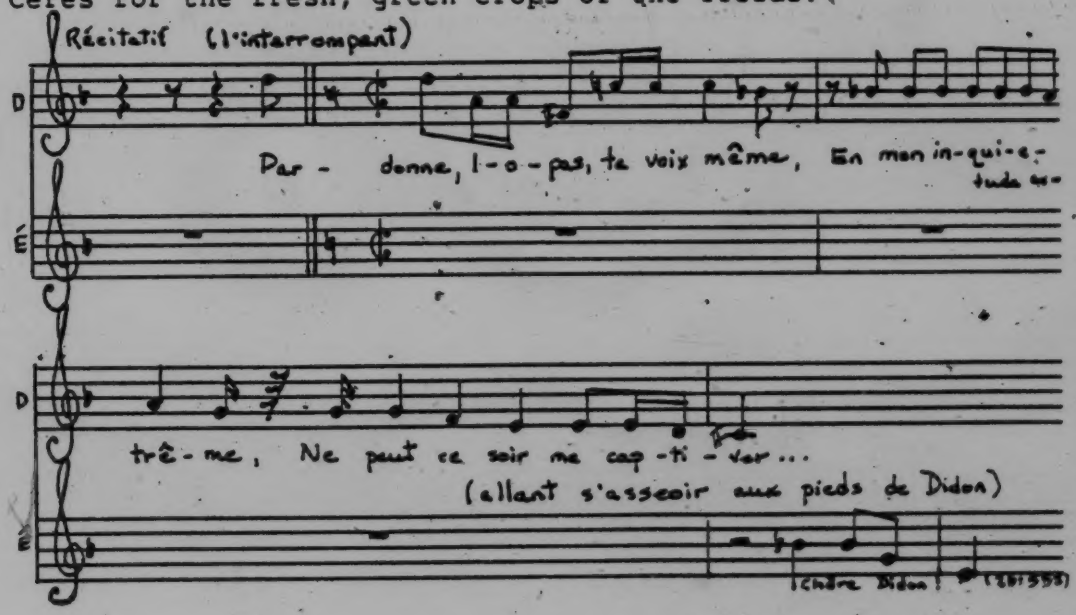
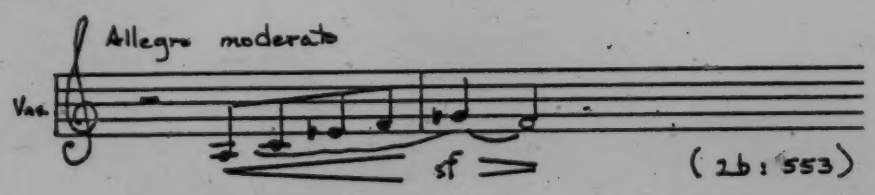
[14] Ibid., p. 174.

devoted to the intervening love affair of Didon and Énée. The royal hunt and storm, as an orchestral interlude accompanied by pantomime, presents the material in capsule form, as a play-within-a-play: Didon and Énée consummate their love relations in an other-worldly setting that is frowned upon by the powers that be. After the removed hunt setting of an African forest, the remaining part of Act Four, which comprises the second tableau, takes place in Didon's gardens by the sea as evening approaches. Narbal, minister at Didon's court, and Anna, her sister, first discuss Didon's lapse from Carthaginian duty; this is followed by a scene of entertainment for the Queen provided by three separate ballet numbers. Didon finds this wearisome and asks Iopas, a Tyrian poet, to sing.

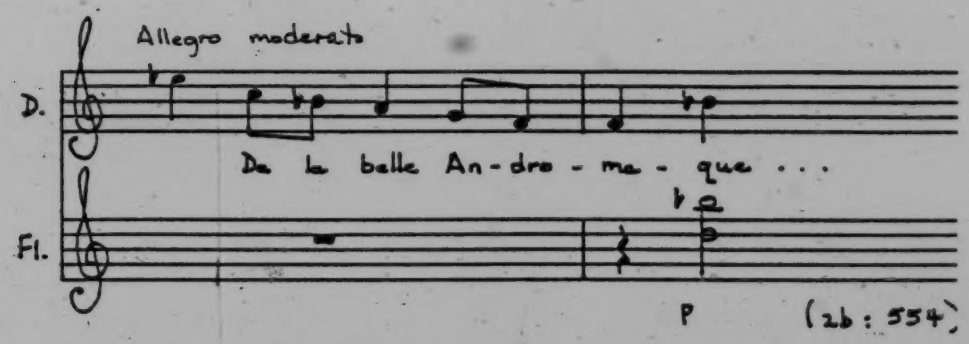
The recitative of number thirty-five begins as Didon interrupts the pastoral song of Iopas, who is extolling Ceres for the fresh, green crops of the fields:



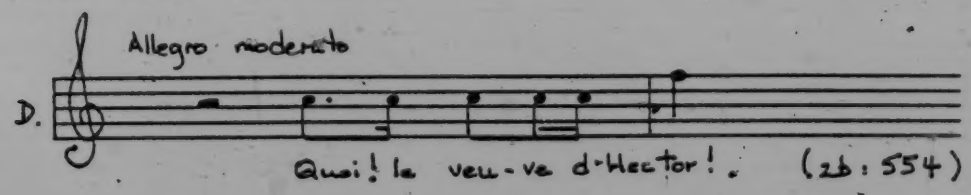
The tempo direction, "animez," supports the action of interrupting, thus bringing an abrupt closure to Iopas' singing and a spontaneous beginning of the recitative passage. The change of metre to 4/4 from the 6/8 of Iopas' song and the new key of C major is easily realized by the recitative line. The breaking-off of these two different forms of diversion clearly establish Didon's restlessness to which she herself alludes in the passage above: "mon inquiétude extrême." Her agitated state of mind is first acted upon by the presence of Énée who interjects with "Chère Didon!" as he sits at her feet. This posture of love and affection is sufficient instigation for Didon to ask Énée for more details of the sack of Troy. The orchestra now interposes its most telling statement for the whole recitative, the broken dominant ninth chord on F rising to a sforzando:



In need of resolution, this chord is answered by the upper winds entoning the tonic chord of B flat major as Didon pronounces the name, Andromaque:

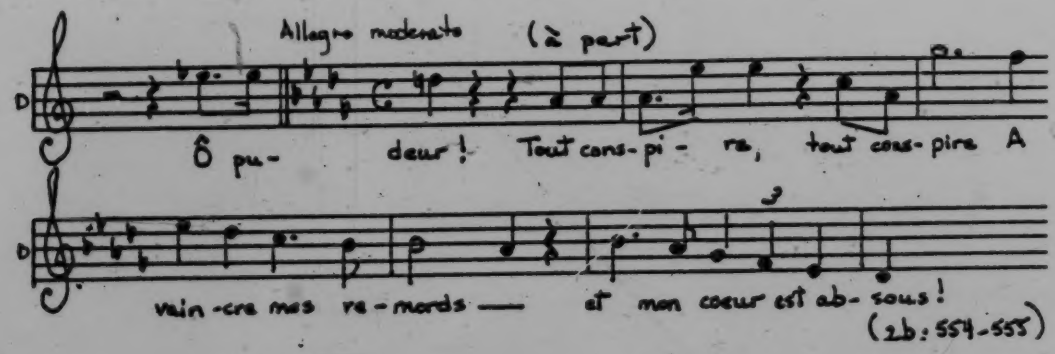


Thus, her interest in Troy follows a very specific, personal fascination for the fate of Andromaque, a widow like herself. The recitative is used to clearly outline the threads of emotional tension accumulating in the operatic work. In contrast to the virgin fields of green, subject of Iopas' song, Didon wants to hear of widowhood and remarriage. This tension is maintained in Énée's answer, which moves from death to love, from marriage to widowhood in telling of Andromaque's remarriage to her husband's slayer. Didon's exclamation--



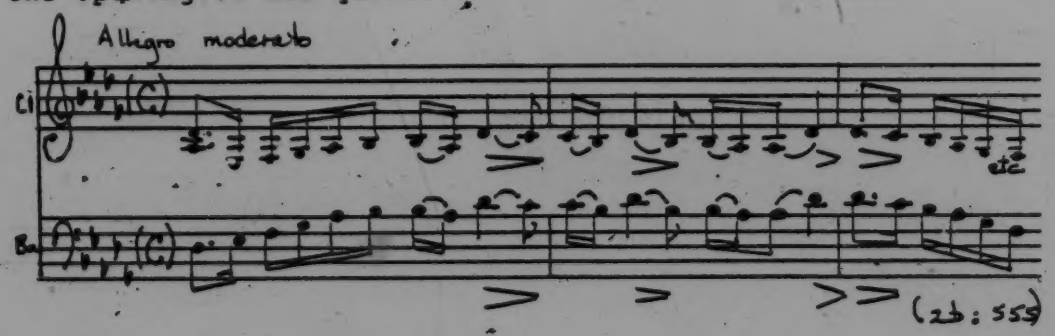
--expresses her continuing obession with widowhood. The subjective nature of her interpretation of Énée's narration is conveyed by a tremolo string accompaniment on the notes of the B flat dominant seventh chord which crescendos to resolution on the E flat major chord; Énée continues to tell of Andromaque ascending the throne of Epirus. A diminished seventh chord is sounded by the orchestra, but Didon has heard all she needs to know. This news of Andromaque will

act as catalyst to her burying all feelings of remorse for betraying the memory of her dead husband, Sichée. Publicly, she sings "Ô pudeur!" which forms the transition from recitative to the quintet of number thirty-five:



The diminished seventh chord from the recitative moves to another one for the syllable "-deur!" but as Didon begins her aside, expressing the inner state of her feelings, the quintet takes off in the key of D flat major.

The opening statement, sung by Didon as an aside, announces the new stage of development in her feelings: "Tout conspire/À vaincre mes remords et mon coeur est absous!" The clarinets and bassoons now enter with an arresting instrumental figure that lends a triumphant air to the opening of the quintet:



Feelings of guilt have been subdued. And Didon and Énée execute the first section of the quintet in delivering oxymorons that describe Andromaque's example: ". . . épouser l'assassin de son père, / Le fils du meurtrier de son illustre époux." Didon then repeats her opening statement, singing over and over again that her heart is absolved. This repetition offers a musical conclusion to the first part of the quintet and also time for Berlioz to insert a little visual incident involving the boy, Ascagne. Ascagne draws the ring of Sichée form the Queen's finger--only noticed by the Queen later--but forgets to replace it on her hand. The symbolism for Didon's conscience is clear, the incident being inspired by a painting of Pierre-Narcisse Guérin entitled "Énée racontant à Didon les malheurs de Troie."[18]

Having exposed the new stage of Didon's feelings, the quintet now offers further reflection upon the state of affairs. The other three members, Anna, Iopas and Narbal, comment upon the symbolic nature of her losing her ring. In the style of an episode, they compare Ascagne to Cupid--an image from Virgil--and take note of the light-fingered way he removes the ring: "la main légère/De cet enfant, semblable à Cupidon" (p. 559). As well as to Cupid, however, Ascagne is more concretely linked to his father, Énée; and what with their combined powers of enticement throughout this second tableau, the family of Énée begins to represent for Didon an alluring, though somewhat negative, force.

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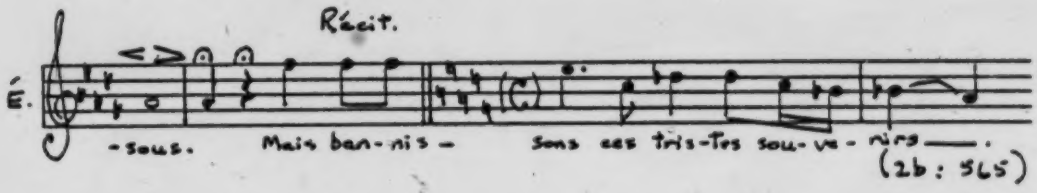
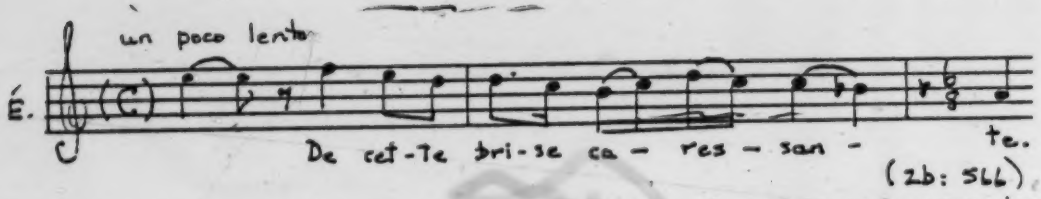
[18] David Cairns, Responses, p. 103.

The full vocal affect of the quintet is summoned for the last part as all five unite to sing a final version of Didon's melody, "Tout conspire/À vaincre mes remords, et mon coeur est absous." What started out at the beginning of the quintet as an aside, now receives public acknowledgement. Didon is ready to forget her past, and the quintet ends in soothing harmony on the D flat major chord with the peaceful sounds of "ab-sous."

After a fermata, Énée takes up the vocal line on a high F for the intervening recitative:



These high notes bear some resemblance to a clarion call in contrast to the sedate ending of the quintet. The recitative line continues the 4/4 metre of the quintet and proceeds in C major. This whole recitative passage of number thirty-six is written for the tenor role which clearly establishes Énée as leader in this bid to forget the past and give themselves over to the sensuousness of the evening air. All of Énée's notes in this recitative are sung in a fairly high register and are accompanied by the higher instruments such as the duos of first and second violins that play con sordino. The effect is a striving upwards as Énée calls them into the night. The feeling of lure is there as well, when he concludes the recitative by singing of the caressing nature of the breeze:



(2b: 566)

The slurred sixteenth notes lend an air of gentleness in depicting the word, "ca-res-san-te." With the final two syllables, "-san-te," Berlioz effected the transition from the note C, via the B flat to the A of the F major chord and the new key of the septet. These quarter notes in the slow tempo of the recitative, "un poco lento," allow the additional movement of compound duple time (6/8) to establish itself.

The septet of number thirty-six has been called an invocation to the sea and the sky.'' It is obvious from the words of the libretto that a mood of peace and calm is being conveyed:

> Tout n'est que paix et charme autour de nous!
> La nuit étend son voile et la mer endormie
> Murmure en sommeillant les accords les plus doux.
> (2b : 567-568)

These words are set to an Andantino melody in F major (6/8) that bears characteristics of a pastorale or a berceuse. An upper pedal on the note C is maintained throughout the septet by the piccolo, flute and clarinet; this, along with the shimmering effect of an occasional tremolo on high C by violin pairs, is suggestive of stars twinkling in the sky. The tone painting is completed by the irregular breaking of waves upon the shore, rendered by the low horns and low

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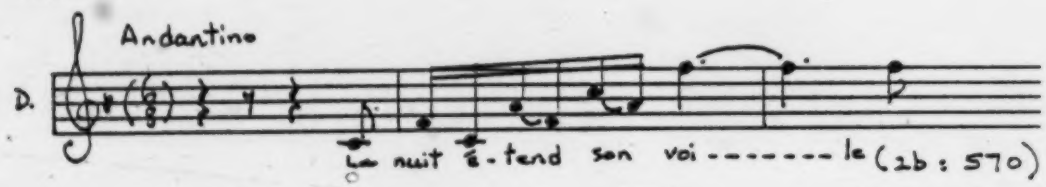
'' Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 169.

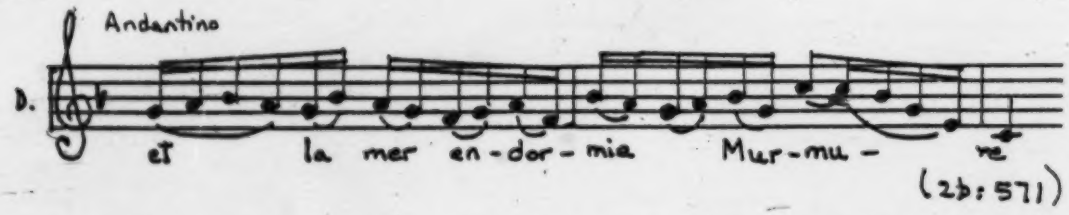
strings, on the F major chord, and the base drum. In this way, the orchestral accompaniment provides a framework into which the singing is fitted. The tendency is for the human voices to blend themselves in with the musical depiction of the natural elements, the sea and the sky. The seven vocal parts move together in harmony; the overall effect is a choral one with no one voice standing out from the others in the first section of the septet. As the seven pursue Énée's invitation to forget the past and escape into night, the predominant mood is one of withdrawing. There definitely exists a hint of the Romantic call for transcendence: to pass beyond the confines of this earthly existence into the sensuous rapture of night and of death. For Didon, this total yielding to her love for Énée will eventually result in her death. When he abandons her for his mission in Rome, she does not survive but commits suicide. It is interesting to note the change of ordering that was necessitated by Berlioz's staging of the epic. In Virgil, the royal hunt represents the climatic consummation of their love and passion. In the opera, Les Troyens, it can only be interpreted as a somewhat pre-mature physical philandering since this great act, featuring the various stages of the crystalization of love, follows. Musically, the royal hunt provides the variety of an orchestral interlude after the militant choral closure to Act Three where Énée joins the Carthaginian forces to fight against the African enemy. It also marks a narrowing of the story perspective to the

relations of Didon and Énée that will be featured in Act Four. In terms of dramatic structure, Berlioz was seeking an operatic alternative to the techniques of flashback used by Virgil in the Aeneid. Aeneas' narration of the sack of Troy, provides time and opportunity for Dido to fall in love with him. The hunt and storm organized by Juno only completes the process. Opera does not have the powers of narration to present flaskback; nor does it allow for the gradual development of emotions in an character. Berlioz's hunt and storm represents Didon and Énée becoming lovers and sets the stage for the ensemble numbers of Act Four which will culminate in the famous love duet.

As the septet proceeds, Didon's vocal line gradually gains a more individual character as she sings graceful, slurred sixteenth notes which are heard apart from the other voices:



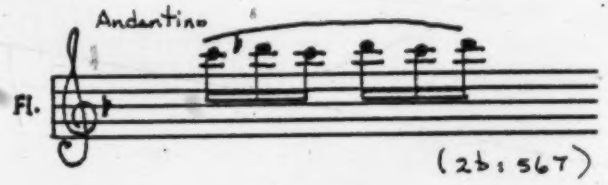
These sixteenth notes develop into a wavering figure as Didon imitates the gentle, rocking motion of the sleeping sea:



The fluctuating nature of this vocal line is suggestive of

falling asleep and is also reminiscent of Didon's own moral lapse. It is her demise that is being prepared. For, in Act Five this very deceptive state of human bliss and harmony will be squelched in the march toward the great epic purpose. Meanwhile, Act Four stands as an overwhelming operatic tribute to the expression of human love and passion.

To complete the act, Berlioz affixed the famous love duet of number thirty-seven. Here he faced the greatest challenge of continuity since he had composed this duet in isolation before the preceding number of Act Four. Berlioz had been inspired by the famous catalogue of tragic lovers, listed by Lorenzo and Jessica in Act Five of The Merchant of Venice; accordingly, he composed an Andantino in 6/8 time in the key of G flat, ". . . because G flat was the inescapable key for love duets in mid-nineteenth-century opera owing to its symbolic profundity and emotional warmth."'' The modulation from the F major key of the septet to the G flat major of the duet was prepared well in advance by Berlioz. Right from the beginning of the septet one finds the upper pedal on C alternating occasionally with a D flat as seen in the sixth measure:

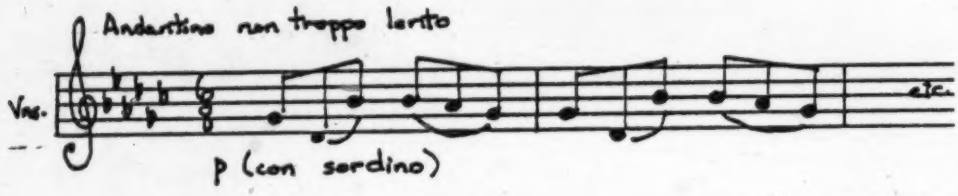


Then, when the singing of the septet is finished and the

'' Ibid., p. 170.

extra five characters have moved off-stage, Berlioz employed this same alternating figure to establish the new key of the duet, a semitone higher:

The double bass complies by a tonic move from F to G flat. Supporting this modulation is the tempo indication "a Tempo" following the ritenuto: this signals a closure to the septet and offers momentum for moving ahead into the duet. As far as metre is concerned, there is no transition needed since both the septet and the duet are in 6/8 time and both at an Andantino tempo. Nonetheless, the duet bears the additional indication, "non troppo lento," and as the violins immediately enter with the following accompaniment--



--the repeated 6/8 note pattern conveys the gentle lulling movement of a Venetian boat song. Didon and Énée now enter to make their most assertive declaration of love: any need for a catalyst is over, any restraint imposed by the past or the present is no longer felt. They confidently compare themselves to famous lovers from history.

In subject matter Berlioz borrowed the basic concept of this lover's scene from <u>The Merchant of Venice</u>--in his own

words, "une scène volée à Shakespeare et virgilianisée."[18] In The Merchant of Venice (5.1). Lorenzo and Jessica present the following catalogue of lovers: Troilus and Cressida, Thisbe, Dido, Medea and Aeson, and finally themselves. Berlioz kept the basic idea of a list but made some substitutions since Dido was on the original roster. In form, the duet consists of a refrain, sung by Didon and Énée together, and verses which they present individually. The refrain was used by Berlioz to depict the general atmosphere of a moonlit night as seen from the libretto text:

> Nuit d'ivresse et d'extase infinie!
> Blonde Phoebé, grands astres de sa cour
> Versez sur nous votre lueur bénie;
> Fleurs des cieux, souriez à l'immortel amour!

He then retained the dialogue form from Shakespeare by having Didon and Énée answer each other with verses that bring yet another example of a famous lover. Shakespeare's formulation for introducing each new lover was "in such a night as this," which is repeated eight times in the passage from The Merchant of Venice. Berlioz translated this as "Par une telle nuit" which ushers in the first four verses, number five beginning with "Et dans la même nuit."

There is a slight variation between Shakespeare's and Berlioz's version as to which of the lovers takes the lead in bringing the discussion to rest upon themselves. In The Merchant of Venice it is Lorenzo who introduces the name of

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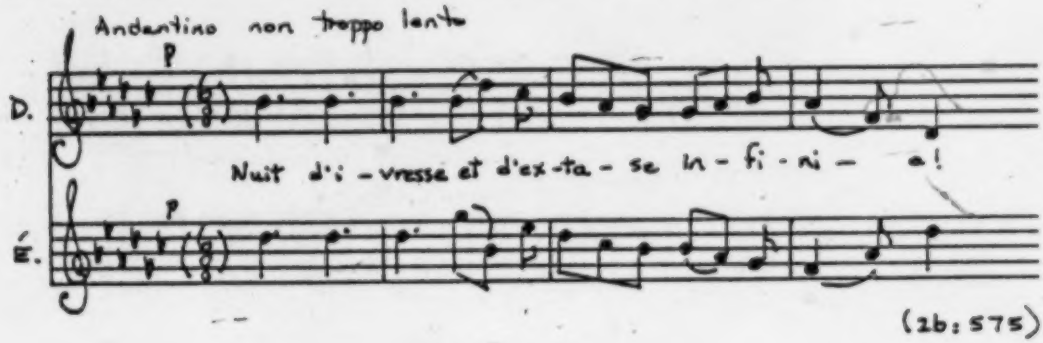
[18] Berlioz, letter to Toussaint Bennet, father of the pianist, Theodore Ritter, written on the eleventh of June, 1856 and reprinted in the Revue de Paris, Vol. XXI, No. 4 (1921), p. 454.

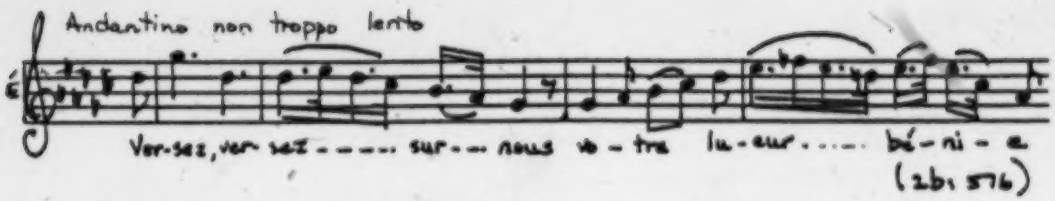
Jessica. In Les Troyens, Didon sings in verse one of Venus and Anchise as the first pair of lovers but as well the parents of Énée. In verse four she directly takes the initiative and refers to the indifference shown by the son of Cythérée, i.e., Énée, toward the passionate love of Queen Didon. This would not appear to be coincidental since Berlioz succeeded over the course of Act Four in depicting the more subjective nature of Didon's involvement. In asking Énée for details of Troy, she really only wanted to hear of Andromaque. And her initiative in this duet, in steering the conversation to themselves, would suggest the greater depth of her involvement in their love affair, and possibly a greater sympathy on the part of Berlioz for her character.

Musically, however, Énée takes the more aggressive role as they enter with the opening refrain of the duet:



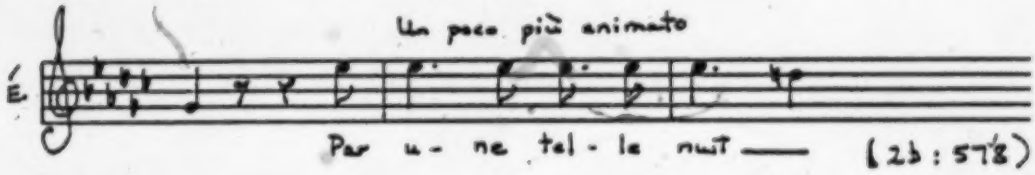
(1b: 575)

His singing of the higher note of the harmony is a feature of the refrain and projects him as the leader. In addition, his singing role gains more prominence through the dotted rhythmic variation used for the next line:

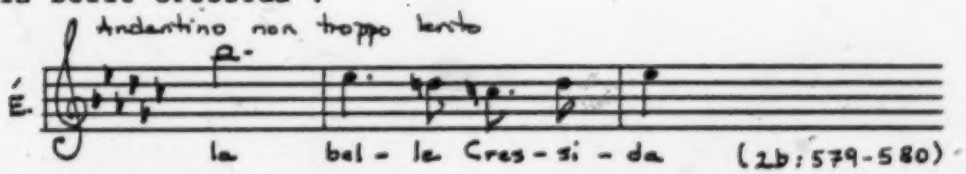


At the conclusion of the refrain, the clarinet is heard in a fourbar passage which bridges the way to the beginning of the first verse.

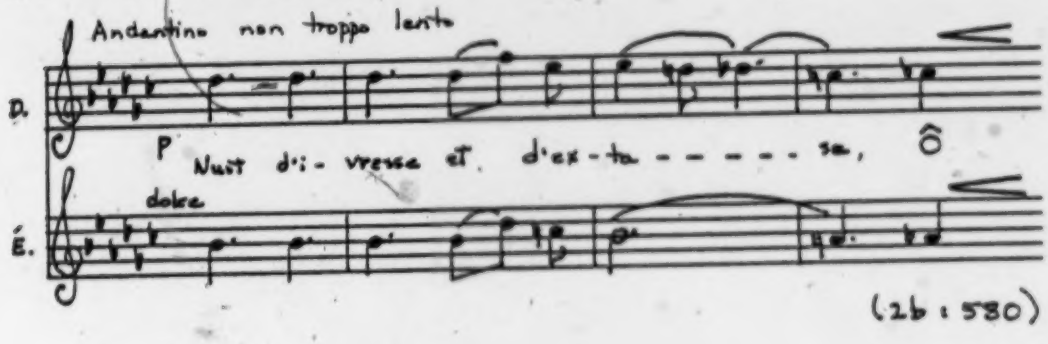
After being closely associated for the refrain, the two voices separate for the verses which introduce episodic music of more variety. Didon begins the first verse on the dominant note of D flat while singing of Venus and Anchises. The accompaniment features the woodwinds in syncopation with the steady beat of the strings. Énée imitates her entry as he begins verse two one tone higher on E flat:



This rising, sequential treatment, plus the direction for a more animated style of singing, ("un poco più animato"), increases the sense of urgency in Énée's impassioned delivery. He copies from Shakespeare in citing the example of Troilus and Cressida, rising to a high B flat as he sings "la belle Cressida":

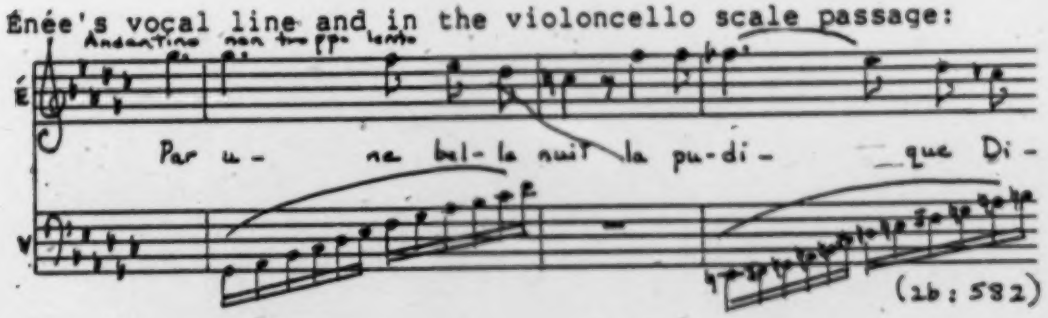


For a repeat of the refrain Berlioz used the technique of a false return. The duo begin the words of the refrain at the original tempo but in the relative minor key of E flat:

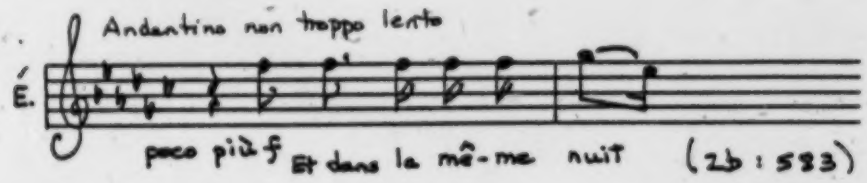


In the fourth measure of this passage the music modulates back to the original key of G flat major for a proper rendering of the refrain. Such false returns were part of Berlioz's system of continuity that promotes a natural flow from section to section without too distinctive breaks.

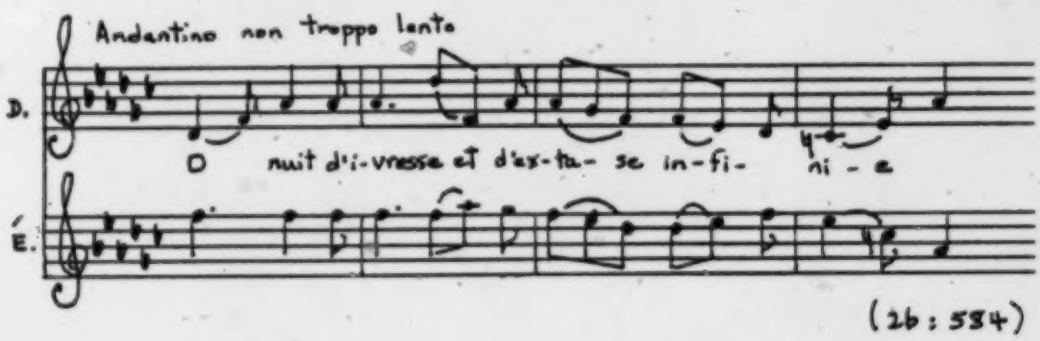
Verse three is sung by Énée, telling of Diane and Endymion, the shepherd she loved. The opening line, "Par une telle nuit," has in common with the previous verses the rhythmic treatment of the word "une": i.e., a dotted quarter note moving to an eighth. Otherwise, this verse can be viewed as a second episode, since it presents the new material of a falling pattern sequence, most obvious in Énée's vocal line and in the violoncello scale passage:



Énée's verse retards slightly as he sings the name, "Endymion." But Didon then rushes in, "a Tempo," with the fourth verse in which she directly accuses Énée of not matching the depth of her emotion. He defensively answers with the same melody, begun a fourth higher and with more volume, ("poco più f"):



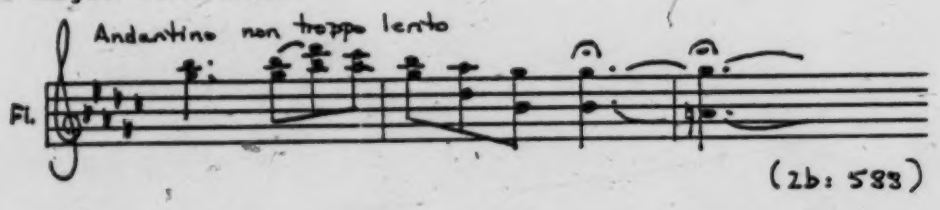
With such means of repetition as well as variation, Berlioz very aptly conveyed the sense of dialogue he wished to transfer from Shakespeare. But after this conversational interchange and the linear development that it represents, the need is felt to return to the horizontal aspect of ensemble work. Didon and Énée take up the solidarity of the refrain, sung in harmony one last time. Again Berlioz opened deceptively, this time in the key of the dominant, D flat:



This exurberant outburst at a forte volume decrescendos after three measures in order to echo the opening line in B flat minor at a very reduced volume of double piano.

Finally, the classic version of the refrain returns in the home key of G flat major with the opening accompaniment of muted violins again in place. A climactic higher C is heard from Énée as he sings the word, "astres," and the duet concludes as the lovers sing repeatedly "Souriez à l'amour" and withdraw into the wings. Despite the lulling 6/8 metre and the calm tones of the G flat major key, the duet is characterized by a harmonic restlessness. The unexpected starts and changes reflect the obsessive quality of Didon's love and hint at the distraction that will arise in Énée's feelings.

Berlioz now had before him the task of bridging the gap between the highly personal level of human passions depicted in Act Four and the will of the gods to prevail in Act Five. He did this by having the god, Mercury, appear on the stage at the conclusion of the duet. He sings only one word, "Italie!" but it serves to remind the audience of the tragic irony that continues to rule over the entire opera, acting as a binding force. As Didon and Énée finish singing, the woodwinds are heard in a brief melody that centres around the G flat major chord. Then, an auspicious drop of B flat to A natural marks an end to the blissful tones of the G flat major love duet:



(2b: 583)

With that, the strings rush in with the ascending scale of D

major, the G flat being assimilated as F sharp. Along with the new key, the time signature changes to 4/4. The gong is struck twice to signify Mercury's symbolic striking of Énée's neglected shield. And a further change in timbre is produced by the metallic and somewhat sinister tones of the trombone and horns which further affirm Mercury's call to distant battle.

With these three numbers, then, Berlioz wished to present a dynamic portrait of the love he imagined to exist between Didon and Énée. The essence of this image was not based upon actions--the only piece of action in these three numbers is the way the boy, Ascagne, removes the ring from Didon's finger--but upon the psychological forces acting upon the pair, and primarily upon Didon: "This is because Les Troyens seeks to impart neither metaphysics nor the details of a legend, but only its psychological and emotional substance. . . ."'' By moving effortlessly, and with little break, between recitative and ensemble and from one number to the next, Berlioz created a unified impression that emerges gradually from the various planes of emotion present. There is the passage of Didon from the intimacy of private regret at the beginning of number thirty-five to public acceptance in the quintet in which she yields to outside influences. Then, in the septet, all in attendance seek an escape from the confines of the present in an other-worldly striving for transcendence. The duet of Didon

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'' Jacques Barzun, Berlioz and His Century, p. 340.

and Énée in number thirty-seven represents the pair coming full circle, as they seek a place in history along with other lovers, to be part of that very past they wished to forget. Symbolically, they themselves place a cadence on their love affair.

Berlioz achieved an overwhelming musical unity by a predominating use of the 6/8 metre in both the septet and the duet which creates a pervading feeling of the berceuse or of pastoral calm. The triplet rhythm of the accompaniment is an integral part of this effect. Also contributing to the serenity of this scene is the emphasis on flat keys throughout the whole section: the quintet in D flat, the septet in F, and the love duet in G flat major.[20] The continuity of this succession of numbers is largely a musical matter since very little happens dramatically.

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[20] R. K. Steblin discusses the qualities attached to various keys in her thesis, Key Characteristics in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries.

CHAPTER 10

Contrast of Genre

In the preceding chapter, we have seen Berlioz achieving a unity of impression through contiguous elements. The Romantics had also come to appreciate the way Shakespeare fostered an overall dramatic unity through the balancing of different kinds of scenes that--though diverse in content--reflected or anticipated motifs intergral to the final outcome. In 1800 Madame de Staël had spoken out in neo-classical fashion against this Shakespearian combination of tragic and comic scenes: "La surprise est certainement un grand moyen d'ajouter à l'effet; mais il seroit ridicule d'en conclure que l'on doive faire précéder une scène tragique d'une scène comique, pour augmenter l'étonnement par le contraste."[1] Châteaubriand, however, was beginning to justify Shakespeare's use of contrast in his essay of 1801. And by the time of writing De l'Allemagne in 1910, Mme de Staël mentioned the universal appeal of Shakespeare's plays because of the mixture of tones and scenes portrayed. Victor Hugo, in his preface of 1827 for the drama, "Cromwell," gave the crowning acceptance to Shakespeare's use of contrast. In this preface, Hugo developed his theory of the grotesque and its ability through comparison to throw light on the sublime

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[1] Madame de Staël, De la Littérature, 1:191.

and the beautiful. Shakespeare is revered as the outstanding creator of a drama of contrast:

> . . . Shakespeare, c'est le drame; et le drame, qui fond sous un même souffle le grotesque et le sublime, le terrible et le bouffon, la tragédie et la comédie. . . .[2]

This power of contrast was exploited by Berlioz in numbers thirty-eight and forty of his opera, Les Troyens.

The idea behind these two numbers was of Berlioz' own invention, which shows the strength of his desire to introduce Shakespearian elements into the libretto. In composing number thirty-eight, "Chanson d'Hylas," Berlioz was reminded of his son, Louis, an officer in the French merchant service. He wrote to Louis in a letter dated Paris, the ninth of February, 1858, of the way he modified Act Five in order to include the sailor's song:

> J'y ai fait une large coupure et j'y ai ajouté un morceau de caractère, destiné à contraster avec le style épique et passionné du reste. C'est une chanson de matelot; je pensais à toi, cher Louis, en l'écrivant et je t'en envoie les paroles.[3]

Berlioz then went on to describe for Louis the night setting of the song and to quote the words of the first verse.

Hylas' song thus serves the function of an interlude between the intense love relations expressed in Act Four by Didon and Énée, and the tragic denouement of Act Five when Énée abandons Didon. With regards to the overall structure of the opera this opening tableau of Act Five bears many

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[2] Victor Hugo, Préface de "Cromwell". Vol. 3 of Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967), p. 57.

[3] Hector Berlioz, Correspondance inédite, ed. Daniel Bernard (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1879), pp. 259-260.

similarities to the first scene of Act Five in Hamlet. The final scene of Act Four in Shakespeare's tragedy discloses the intrigue of King Claudius and Laertes to procure Hamlet's death in a fencing bout: if not by Laertes' superior skill than by a poisoned sword tip. Failing that, the king is to stand by with a lethal drink. As an additional catalyst to Laertes' motive for avenging his father's death, the queen brings news of Ophelia's drowning. The king concludes the act with the following words:

> Let's follow, Gertrude:
> How much I had to do to calm his rage!
> Now fear I this will give it start again;
> Therefore let's follow.[4]

The audience, with foreknowlege of the plot to kill Hamlet, is left in an expectant mood. Act Five opens in a churchyard where two clowns are digging a grave. This first scene is unexpected in terms of setting and of character type. Moreover, these two clowns carry on a conversation that brings a new level of language to the play. With their seemingly naïve--yet more truthful--means of expressing themselves, they point up the double standard existing in Elizabethan society on the question of Ophelia receiving a Christian burial. Their unequivocal and--for aristocratic tastes, insensitive--use of words leads to passages of black humour in which they joke about death and expose skulls as they dig.

As the scene proceeds they banter on the subject of departed souls with Hamlet, who has entered the churchyard.

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[4] Hamlet, act 4, sc. 7, lines 186-189.

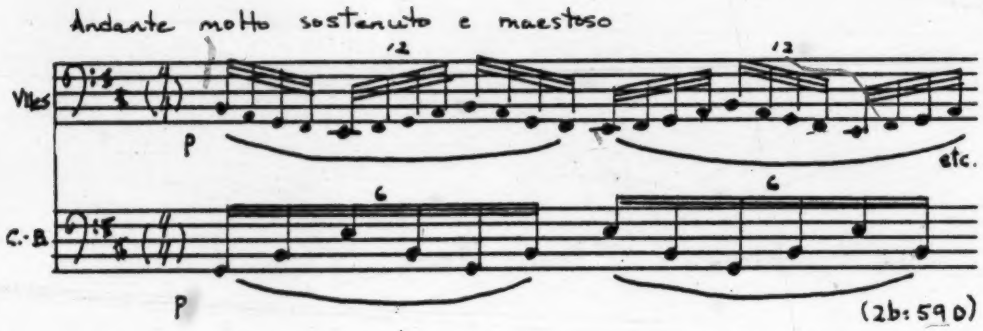
This exchange offers an interesting reflection on the general theme of language in the play, since the clowns now answer Hamlet in kind: they play on the ambiguity of word meanings in the same manner used by Hamlet during his period of feigned madness. When Hamlet asks whose grave it is, the following exchange with the first clown takes place:

> First Clo. Mine, sir. . . .
> Ham. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in 't.
> First Clo. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.
> Ham. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in it and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.
> First Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir: . . .
> (5. 1. 128-129)

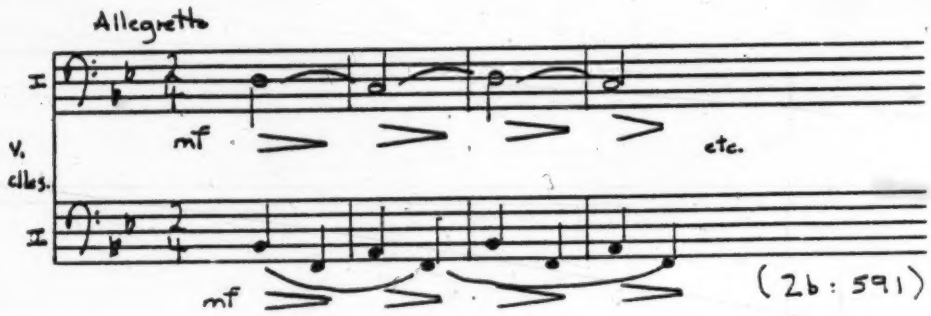
Their mirroring of Hamlet on philological grounds is paralleled by the image of death projected: death as the great equalizer, levelling all beings regardless of class or ambition. And what first appeared as a contrast of characterization, i.e., the staging of clown or low types, direct opposites to the nobility of the Danish court, evolves as a second side to the same coin. Gradually, this graveyard scene takes its place as an integral element of the dramatic entity being enacted. This very concrete reference to death--in terms of the graveyard setting and of the clowns' casual acceptance of it--acts as an antithesis to the existential pondering of Hamlet as witnessed in the earlier soliloquy, "To be or not to be." In addition, this very overt presentation of the theme of death foreshadows the tragedy to strike Hamlet at the end of the play. He

grapples with Laertes as they leap into Ophelia's grave; in the final scene they confront each other in a fatal fencing match. The true graveyard of scene one, Act Five, degenerates into the false graveyard of scene two where the remaining main characters meet a premature death. Thus, the scene with the clowns offers comic relief but in fact is instrumental in the creation of the pervading tragic vision.

Similarly, the sailor Hylas sings simply of homesickness, but in reflection his situation points to the whole Virgilian theme of fate and destiny. Hylas' song, number thirty-eight of Les Troyens, Hylas's song, number thirty-eight of Les Troyens, introduces the first tableau of Act Five in which the Trojans take leave of Carthage. The second tableau takes place in Didon's palace as she reacts to their departure; and the final tableau features the funereal ending of the opera. Act Four has ended with the ominous entry of the god, Mercury, who gravely entones the word, "Italie!," three times. This recall to duty forms a sobering conclusion to the climactic love duet of Act Four. After Mercury's pronouncement, the whole orchestra emphatically sounds the chord of E minor at a double forte volume and repeats it. The lower strings then produce a five-note ascending and descending run which has a rumbling effect:

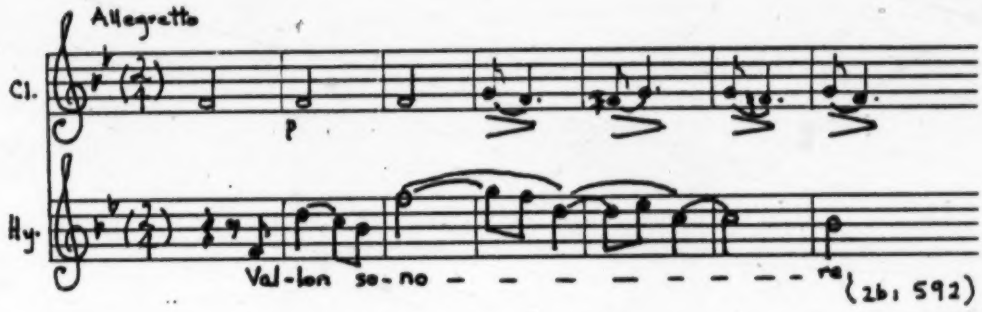


The music for Hylas' song opens with an alternating, falling-note pattern played by the second cellos:

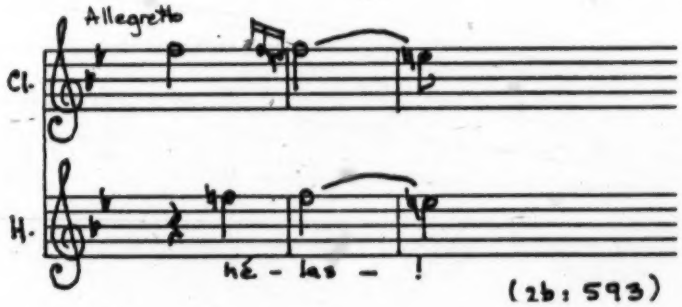


The regularity of this falling-note figure, plus the monotony of the D alternating with the C, played by the first cellos, depict in musical tones the hypnotic effect of the sea's motion. Hylas is stationed on night duty at the masthead of a ship, part of the Trojan fleet still moored in the harbour of Carthage. Cast as a tenor, he sings a simple, strophic aria in the key of B flat major that contrasts markedly with the highly dramatic pronouncement of Mercury at the end of Act Four. This theatrical moment of immortal intervention, calling Énée back to the reality of the Trojan mission, is replaced by the character of a folk-song and its expected stress on repetition. Hylas' opening words are sung to a melodic line that displays a certain lightness and a

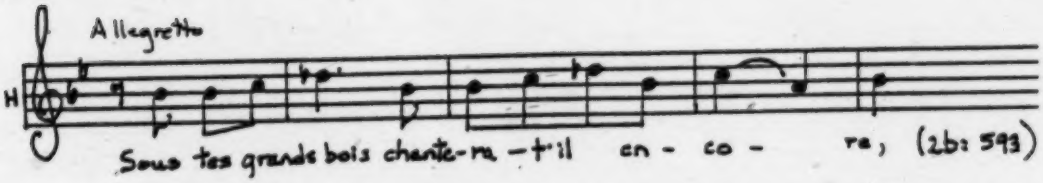
waywardness, attained by suspending main melody notes over the primary beat. This effect is enhanced by syncopation in the clarinet accompaniment:



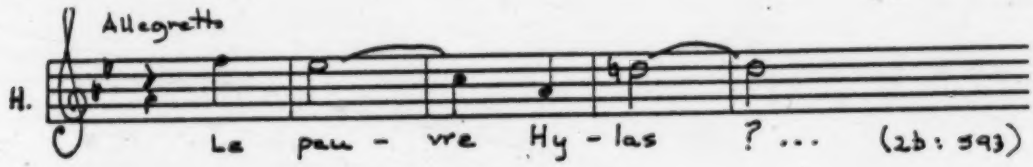
The musical phrase is repeated as Hylas sings his second line of verse, "Où dès l'aurore." The melisma involved in allowing the syllables "-no-" and "-ro'" to be extended over the upper portion of this melodic phrase for four bars places all emphasis on the music at this point and little on the actual meaning of the words. The song continues with a new melodic line which is followed by the exclamation, "hélas!":



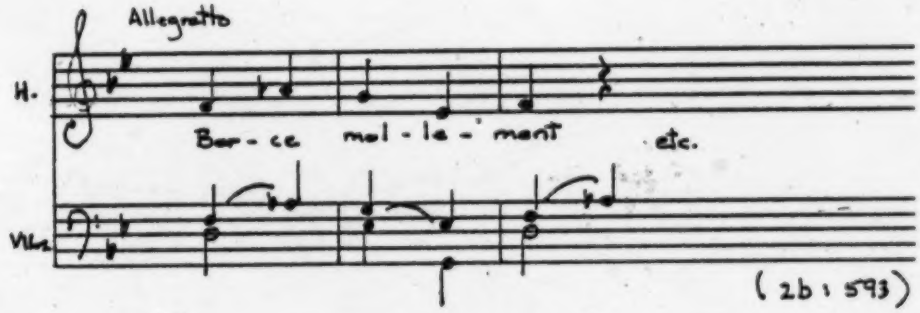
This exclamation will be repeated at this point in all three strophes. The final melodic phrase of the song also shows the simple, repetitive character of the piece:



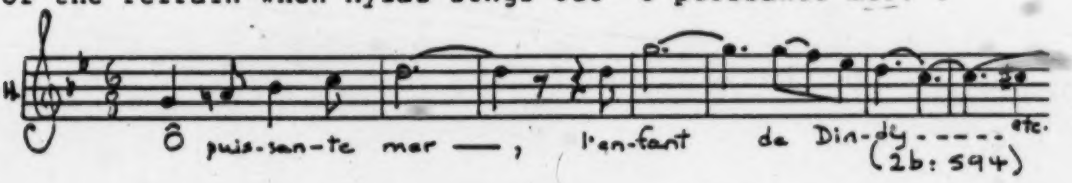
As a closing sigh, to be repeated in all strophes, Hylas gives full vent to the nostalgia felt for his lost homeland by singing



After a signaling bar from the bass and cello, Hylas sings a refrain based upon the musical idea presented in the lower string introduction:



The text for the refrain depicts the rocking motion of the sea, ready to receive all sailors in her grasp. The deceptive calm of the waters is conveyed in the second line of the refrain when Hylas sings out "Ô puissante mer!":



This reference to the powerful sea is given added significance by the way in which Berlioz has switched the time signature to a 6/8 metre. The effect is really only felt for the single phrase of the above two bars since the dotted quarter notes that prevail thereafter make easy absorption of the compound duple time back to the simple duple time of the rest of the song.

Thus, for Hylas the sea is the primeval force that carried him away from his homeland and continues to buffet him about on the waves of fortune. He really only looks backward, for he has little understanding for the great quest of founding a new Troy. Hylas is representative of the little man in history, pawn to the great events taking place. Just as Queen Didon's suffering is depicted in a grand and heroic style, so also Berlioz included in this sailor's song an example of intimate and very personal suffering. In this way, the image of suffering is presented as in a novel from more than one perspective.[8] The portrait of the sea's strength is given additional depth after the second strophe when the string section enters with a rush of sixteenth notes that crescendo and decrescendo to suggest the sea getting rougher.

In the third strophe Hylas recalls the humble cottage in Troy where he bade farewell to his mother. At this point the two sentries, on guard at the back of the stage, break

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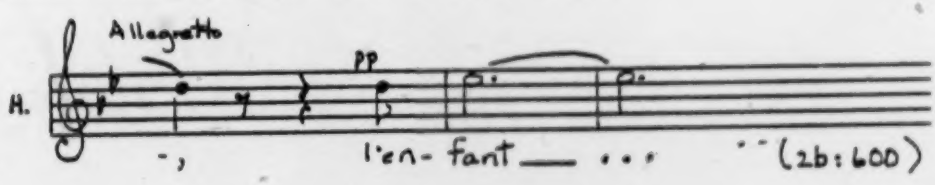
[8] Peter Conrad discusses the analogy of opera with the literary genre of the novel in his book, Romantic Opera and Literary Form (Berkeley: University of California, 1977).

in with comments on the nostalgic sailor, Hylas, who is not likely to see his homeland again. Both are cast as bass roles and both sing their lines on the monotone A. Their interjections function as a bridge with reality in the face of the dreamy, lost world conjured up by Hylas: he has even used the third person, ("il" and "le pauvre Hylas"), when singing about himself. This vocal entry of the sentries also anticipates their duet to follow as number forty of the opera.

To complete the final strophe, Hylas begins the refrain. But after singing, "O puissante mer," he only succeeds in sounding the word, "l'enfant," before falling asleep. In contrast to the earlier strophes where he rises from a D to a G on this word, "l'enfant," Hylas here only reaches the semitone form D to E flat:



This step leaves a much more open-ended sound. By leaving off the ending phrase, "de Dindyme!" he leaves the harmonic resolution to the clarinets, which conclude the song in the related minor key of G. Hylas falls asleep, victim of the sea's rocking motion, and symbol of the individual who must yield to the greater force of destiny.

This song of Hylas creates a moment of relief through the presentation of a non-heroic character and through the circular folksong style of melody. The feeling of relief

receives more concrete or plastic form as it is perceived in contrast to the material of Act Four; and it will act as a backdrop against which the rest of Act Five will unfold. A. P. Rossiter has compared the creation of a relief in literature to its use in sculpture: ". . . figures brought out by being laid against something, or an absence of something, so that the effects interact, to produce a unified but complex reaction of the mind."[4] This feeling of nostalgia and of a certain hopelessness, expressed by Hylas, prepares for the ultimate personal grief of Didon, who in a higher social sphere falls victim to the Trojan fate.

Such characters as Hylas and the sentries convey a sense of tragic irony to the audience by their very unawareness of the overall destiny of which they are a part. Hylas has been captured at a moment of looking backward to his youth in Troy. Number thirty-nine presents the recitative and chorus of a Trojan priest and chieftains who express the urgent need to quit Carthage and move on to the new homeland. The two sentries in number forty create another lull in the ongoing action of the opera as they pause to grumble about the discomfort of constantly changing abodes. The scene was intended by Berlioz to offer comic relief and also to create an effective contrast with Énée's tormented monologue which follows in number forty-one.

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[4] A. P. Rossiter, Horns & Other Shakespeare Lectures, ed. Graham Storey (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1961), p. 281.

The earthy level of talk heard from the sentries throws all emphasis on the physical present. Unconcerned with a more philosophical outlook on life, they simply react to the immediate situation in front of them, bringing comic relief from the weightiness of the Trojan destiny felt by such characters as Cassandre and Énée. Susan Snyder, in her book, The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies, refers to the lack of control over events exerted by comic characters:

> Most characters in comedy are manipulators and do little to control events. Their role is to respond to events, welcoming the good fortune (or bad. . .) and meeting adverse turns either by some evasive action or by adapting to them.[7]

To compensate for the rigours of the sailor's life at sea, these two sentries have taken advantage of the comforts of Carthage which they now discuss in their duet. It is the familiar "hearkening after the flesh,"[8] that standard fount of comic material. According to Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz cited Macbeth and King Lear as his models for setting up this type of scene.[9] Perhaps the best example occurs in Act Two, scene three, of Macbeth when the Porter is queried by Macduff in the following manner:

> Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed, That you do lie so late?
> Port. 'Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock: and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.
> Mac. What three thing does drink especially

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[7] Susan Snyder, The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 24.

[8] Ibid., p. 32.

[9] Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 171.

provoke?
Port. Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine.
Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes;
it provokes the desire, but it takes away
the performance: therefore, much drink may
be said to be an equivocator
with lechery. . .'[10]

Such unadorned talk of drink and its direct physical effects upon the body presents an audience, who has just heard of Duncan's murder in scene two--not only with comic relief--but also with breathing space to absorb the reality of Macbeth's foul deed. Thus, these comic scenes not only produce an effect through contrast of character and style of language but also open up new ways of perception for the audience. As well, there is a suggestion of comic relativism: the obsession with drink and sex is ascribed to the lower classes. But in fact the main character, Macbeth, is capable of murdering another earthly being, which shows much greater disrespect for the human body and for higher values.

The mood for the sentries' duet is readily established by the lower strings, playing pizzicato, as they enter with octave leaps on the tonic note of B flat. The monotony of the 4/4 metre is soon reinforced by the bassoons who enter two bars later with the same broken octaves. The bassoon instrument is traditionally used for comic effect because of its timbre and its low register. Together with the cellos and bass, it establishes a very lively tempo: this tempo

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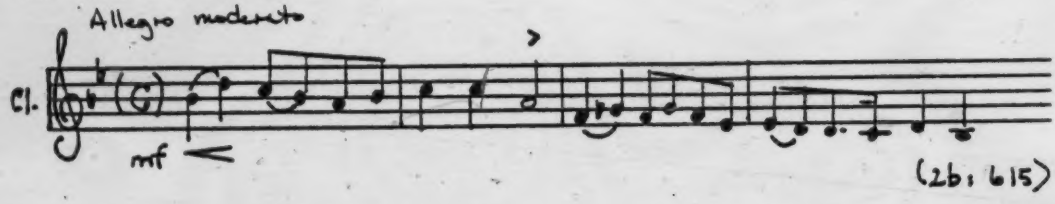
[10] William Shakespeare, Macbeth, ed. John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968), act 2, sc. 3, lines 25-35.

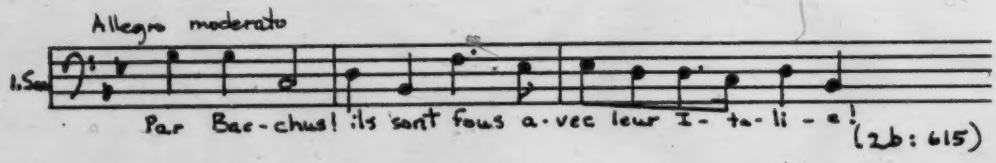
cannot coincide with the pace of the sentries on guard whether taken at half time or full time. Therefore, a sense of discrepancy is established, one of the primary sources of comic effect. The bass voices of the two sentries take part in the duet in an interjectory, fragmented style somehow dragging behind the main framework of the piece. This lugubrious, reluctant manner aptly provides a musical equivalent for the grumbling they are doing.

Just prior to the first sentry's singing, the clarinet part begins a lively melody that conveys a certain jauntiness to offset in style and in pitch the singing of the sentries:



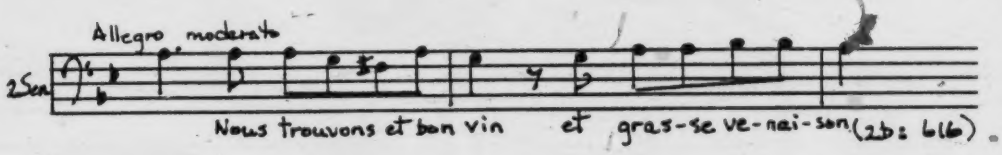
The clarinet line is announced as a melody but in fact the sentries only sing the entire line once, later in the duet. With its forward motion this melody seems to bear the only suggestion in the duet of the ongoing project to break camp for Italy.

The initial phrase sung by the first sentry clearly hints at the type of piece to follow:



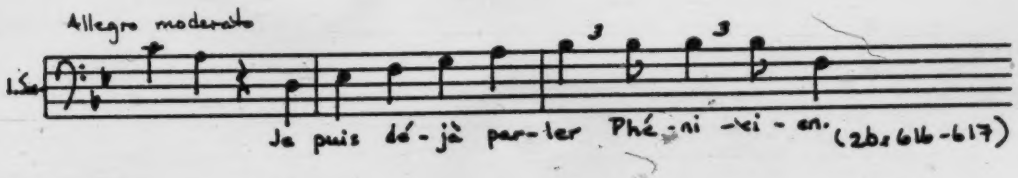
Indeed, the sentries are staging a mutual grumbling session

in protest of having to take leave again of what has become familiar surroundings. In true comic fashion they extol the good life ("la belle vie") they have enjoyed on Carthaginian shores. The style in which Queen Didon welcomed Énée seems to have filtered down to the lower classes, as the sentries describe the good wine and rich venison they have enjoyed ("bon vin et grasse venaison"):



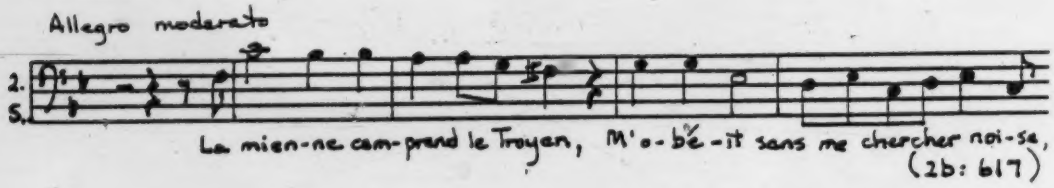
Such a vocal line is somewhat choppy since each syllable coincides with a separate note offering little variance through rhythm or melodic leaps; it is sometimes referred to as a parlando style and is very typical of bass voice in Italian comic opera. The effect is rather non-melodic, the opposite of parts of Hylas' song where all stress was placed on the melody with the words forgotten.

When it comes to talk of women, Berlioz has included an interesting detail which shows his awareness of languages and communication. The first sentry mentions his ability to converse in the Phoenician tongue:

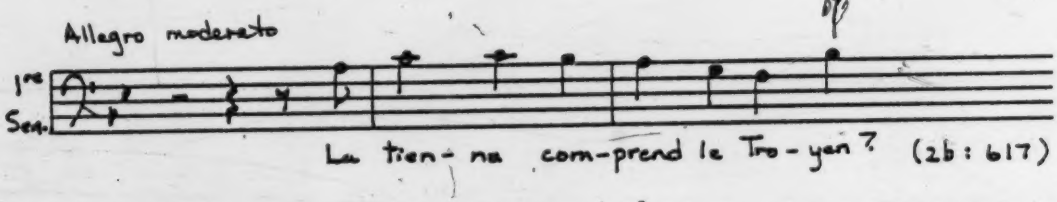


Not to be outdone, the second entry counters with his girl's facility to speak the Trojan language and generally to be

very cooperative:

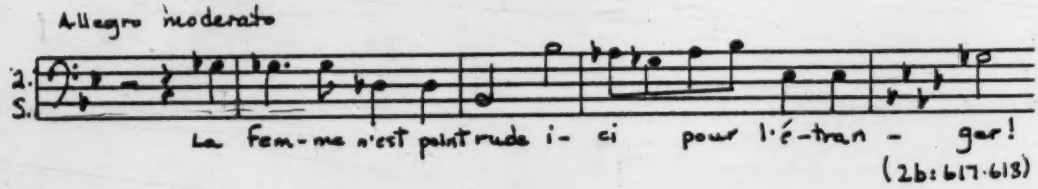


This exchange amounts to a little contest in oneupmanship as the two sentries try to outdo each other. The first sentry questions the other's girl speaking Trojan by repeating the same melodic line:

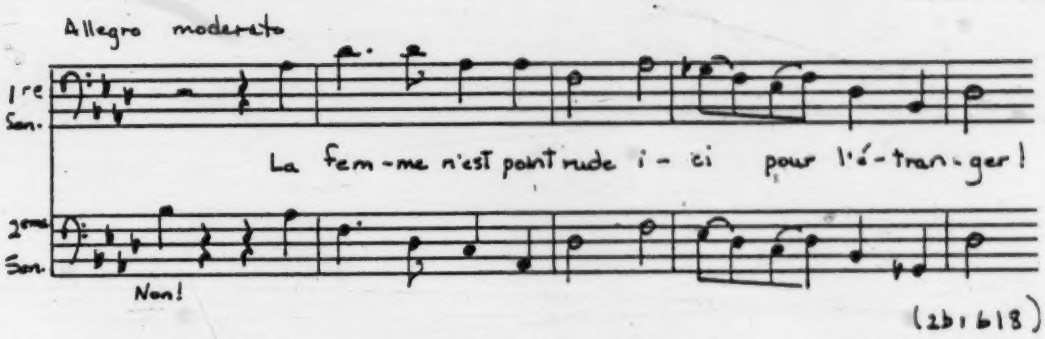


The echoing of the first "la mienne" with the questioning "la tienne," illustrates the bragging going on.

The two sentries now unite in their praise of Carthaginian women as their most dynamic melodic statement of the whole duet is introduced. The melody is first sung by the second sentry in the key G flat major:

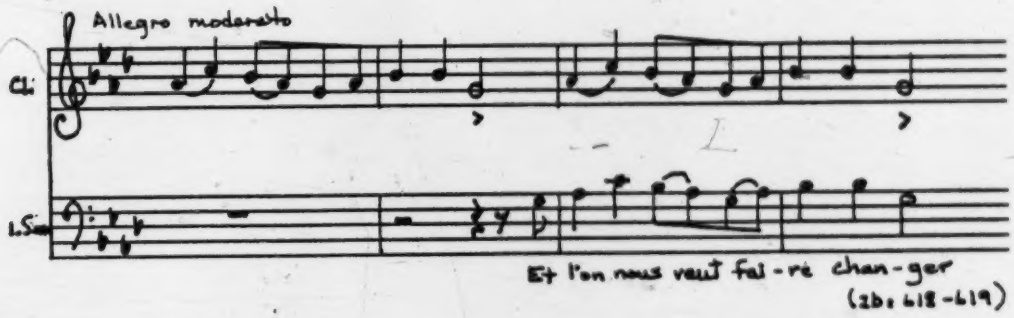


After an exclamatory, "Non!" from the first sentry on B flat and seconded by the other sentry as he repeats the "Non!", they together sing this melodic line a fifth higher, momentarily in the key of D flat major:

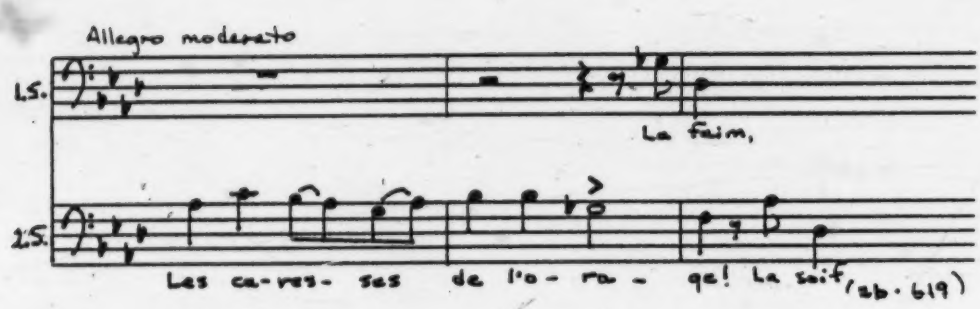


This musical phrase contains the most melodic variation yet heard in the piece with interval skips, slurred notes and more rhythmic variety. Providing the high point of their duet, this mutual outburst from the sentries carries a mock heroic tone because of the subject matter.

The clarinet melody from the beginning of number forty is now heard. The sentries try to imitate that line:

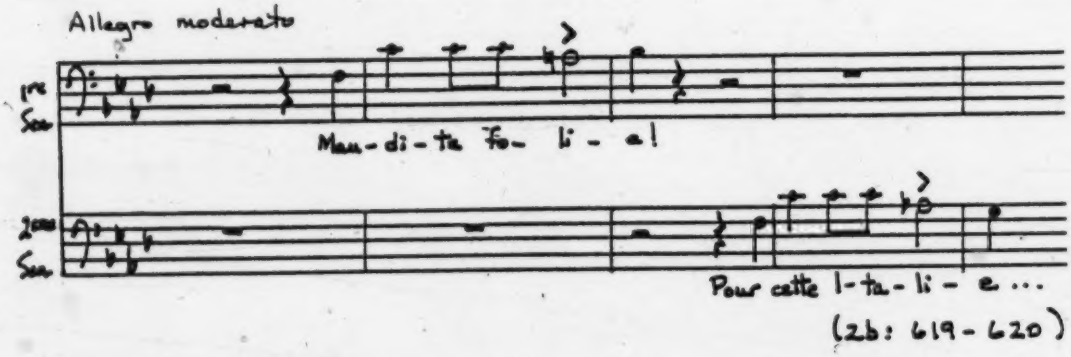


The clarinet line again brings a reminder of the impending voyage. And at this point the sentries move into the second half of the duet; they grumble about leaving Carthage and about the homeless and hard life that awaits them. They sarcastically sing of the caresses of a storm at sea to the tune of the clarinet melody, followed by comic interjections:



Complaining of hunger and thirst is in keeping with the overall theme of their duet. Their approach to the image of the sea differs from that of Hylas. He is depicted as somewhat overwhelmed by the power that the sea holds on his life. The sentries only begrudge the inconvenience that life at sea causes, a momentary helplessness.

Another comic effect to be cited from the duet is the way key words are featured musically. The two sentries lead up to cursing the whole project of establishing a new homeland in two answering phrases:



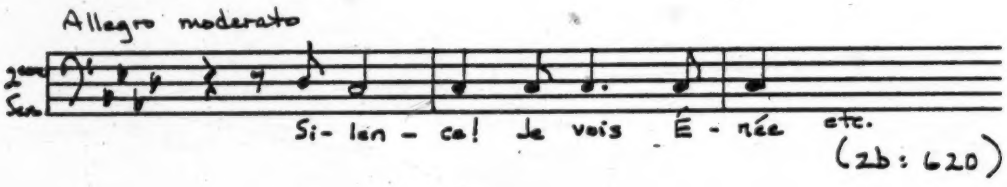
The accented A natural resolving to a B flat from the first sentry becomes an accented A flat moving to G from the second sentry. This playing with the word "Italie"--first done in the opening line of the duet--creates an ironic

echoing of the way the word has been used up to this point in the opera. In Part One of the opera, staged in Troy, it is Cassandre and her female followers who announce this word as their dying gasp. The word "Italie" crowns their act of suicide, committed to escape their Greek conquerors. Mercury sings "Italie" in order to call Énée back from his lapse of duty in Carthage; and the spectres use it at the beginning of Act Five to motivate the Trojans into the action of quitting Carthage. On these previous occasions, the word "Italie" was always sung ominously on a monotone to the same rhythmic pattern: two sixteenth notes for the first two syllables ("I-ta-") and quarter notes for the last two ("-li-e").

Here the sentries are poking fun at--what to them--appears to be a great deal of melodrama connected with the word, "Italie!". To them, the significance of this reoccurring call is not the grand, heroic destiny of founding a new Trojan homeland, but rather the arduous voyage that lies immediately in front of them. Typical in the depiction of the lower class, they are presented as only seeing what is directly in front of them and showing little comprehension of the overall scheme of events.

But even in this attention to the earthy side of existence there is a slight reflection of the dilemma in which Énée is caught. His delaying in Carthage has also been a lapse into the physical present as he partakes of the hospitality proffered by the enamoured Didon. In a

Shakespearian way this comic scene with the sentries provides contrast yet suggests a link that would bring the lowly sentries and the heroic Énée closer together. Through comic characters Berlioz drew a parallel to Énée's weaknesses as a human being in order to reflect on the question as to whether he was cowardly to abandon Didon in the way he did. The sentries add a touch of realism to complement the agonizing that Énée goes through as he struggles with the decree of the gods. The image of his love relations with Didon has been featured in Act Four in terms of subject matter and in style of music presented. By retouching on man-woman relations here on a totally different plane, Berlioz created the necessary distance for the leave taking of Énée that follows. The duet ends with the second sentry calling for silence as he catches wind of the approach of Énée:



(2b: 620)

His final mumblings are on the monotone of C with the clarinet again bearing the weight of the main melodic interest.

Thus, Berlioz went beyond the obvious means of musical contrast which involves change of dynamics, of pitch, of timbre and of tempo. In plotting out the structure of his libretto he introduced the scenes of relief with Hylas and with the sentries that diffuse the dramatic tension built up

by the relations between Didon and Énée. Musically, this diversion is first achieved by the circular, repetitive nature of Hylas' aria. The non-melodic character of the sentries' style of singing also runs contrary to the ongoing movement of the opera as it builds to the musical and dramatic climaxes of Act Five featured in the monologue arias of Didon and of Énée. The vocal line of numbers thirty-eight and forty thus establishes this concept of relief and diversion. But it is also the music, supplying the instrumental accompaniment, that in fact connects these scenes with the main story. Hylas sings against the background of the sea which eventually lulls him asleep; he is clearly depicted as victim to the wandering nature of the Trojan mission. In this way, he symbolizes the personal suffering implied by this great historical event and foreshadows the plight of Didon to follow. The sentries as well, supply a unifying force to the Trojan story by relating the common and the heroic.

Overall, one can see how the different elements of Berlioz' "système shakespearien" contribute to the dramatic unity of Les Troyens. Dramatic irony, the topic of chapter six as well as the play-within-a-play situations discussed in chapter seven foreshadow themes that are part of the final outcome. Berlioz also introduced the supernatural as a catalyst to motivate Énée and further the plot towards the establishing of the new Roman homeland. The genius of Shakespearian unity--both through contiguous and contrastive

elements--was the fascination of Romanticists and also of Berlioz as shown in chapters nine and ten. The thematic inspiration for Les Troyens had been a lifelong interest for Berlioz and the manner in which he sought to portray it through libretto and score show the objective deliberation of a mature artist.

Despite these techniques for dramatic continuity, the opera was considered insufferably long for the Parisian Opera; the second half of the work was staged finally at the "Théâtre-Lyrique"in 1863. Les Troyens was not staged in its entirety until 1890 in Karlsruhe.

Such indifference on the part of Parisian audiences to his "grand opéra" soured Berlioz at what should have been the pinnacle of his career as a French Romantic composer. He was robbed of any further ambition in the area of "grand opéra" and only found the necessary energy for the light-hearted vein of "opéra-comique." In his final operatic work, Béatrice et Bénédict, his goal became music of diversion.

CHAPTER 11

BÉATRICE ET BÉNÉDICT : The Transfer of Verbal Wit into Music

The purpose of this musico-literary analysis from Berlioz's opéra-comique, Béatrice et Bénédict, is to show his transformation into an operatic work of what he considered to be the essance of Shakespeare's comedy, Much Ado About Nothing. Berlioz had entertained the idea of composing an opéra-comique based upon this comedy as early as 1833, and in the early 50's made some preliminary oulines for such a work. It was not until 1862, however, that the total creation of libretto and musical score--both under Berlioz's pen--was completed. Motivation was provided by an invitation from Édouard Bénazet, director of the Baden-Baden Opera, who first commissioned Berlioz to compose a work on a historical text to do with the Thirty Years War; Berlioz rejected this idea and retrieved his earlier plans to transfer Shakespeare's comedy into a musical drama.

Berlioz worked from the French translation of Much Ado About Nothing rendered by Benjamin Larouche in 1839 under the title, Beaucoup de bruit pour rien' Berlioz was quick to see the inherent danger, with regards to a musical work, in using a title which could allow the suggestion of much

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' William Shakespeare, Oeuvres complètes de Shakspeare, trans. Benjamin Laroche, vol. 3: Beaucoup de bruit pour rien (Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1896).

"noise" for nothing; he opted instead for the name of the two railing lovers, Beatrice and Benedick, which also betrays his conception of Shakespeare's work as a whole. Berlioz chose to drastically cut the material presented in the original comedy. The Shakespearian work presents a five-act comedy revolving around three sub-plots: Claudio's wooing of Hero, the merry war of wit between Beatrice and Benedick, and the witless but fruitful bumblings of Dogberry and Verges. Shakespeare left behind an eternal dilemma for future literary critics as to which is really the main plot: to pose Claudio as the protagonist proves unsatisfactory because of the obvious limitations to his character, in particular the cruelty he displays in the church wedding scene where he exposes his bride-to-be, Hero, as supposedly unchaste. He exists as a stereotype of the conventional society of Messina and falls prey to whatever rumour or gossip that is circulating in betrayal of any deepfelt sentiments for Hero.

Berlioz avoided this problem entirely by concentrating on the interaction between Beatrice and Benedick; the role of Claudio in the "opéra-comique" is reduced to a part in the men's trio of Act One, and the whole intrigue, set in motion by the evil Don John and brought to light inadvertently by the night-watchman, Dogberry, is eliminated. In order to fulfil the function of low comedy Berlioz created the buffoon-like figure of the choirmaster, Somarone, the name meaning "big donkey."

After the conventional choral opening and a solo aria by Héro, Berlioz presented an ensemble piece signifying the first confrontation of characters in the operatic work: Béatrice and Bénédict are brought together in a duet, sung as the fourth number in Act One. This duet will now be analysed in terms of its music and its libretto as indicative of Berlioz's portrayal of Shakespeare's characters.

The subject matter for this duet was based to a large extent upon the first conversation between Beatrice and Benedick which occurs in Shakespeare in scene one of Act One as follows (with the simultaneous translation of B. Laroche):

Beat. I wonder that you will ſtill be talking, Signoir Benedicke, no body markes you.	Beat. Je m'étonne que vous vous mêliez encore à la conversation, seigneur Bénédict; personne ne fait attention à vous.
Bene. What, my deere Ladie Diſdaine! are you yet liuing?	Béné. Eh quoi! signora Dédain, vous vivez encore?
Beat. Is it poſſible Diſdaine ſhould die, while ſhee hath ſuch meete foode to feede it, as Signior Benedicke? Curteſie it ſelfe muſt conuert to Diſdaine, if you come in her preſence.	Béat. Comment le dédain pourraitil mourir, lorsqu'il trouve un aliment aussi inépuisable que le seigneur Bénédict? La courtoisie elle-même se transforme en dédain quand vous paraissez en sa présence.
Bene. Then is curteſie a turnecoate, but it is certaine I am loued of all Ladies, onely you excepted: and I would I could finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truely I loue none.	Béné. La courtoisie alors est une volage. Ce qu'il y a de certain, c'est que je suis aimé de toutes les dames, vous exceptée; et je regrette d'avoir un coeur si insensible, car, en vérité, je n'en aime aucune.

Beat. A deere happineffe to women, they would elfe haue beene troubled with a pernitious Suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my Dog barke at a Crow, than a man fweare he loues me.	Béat. C'est un grand bonheur pour les femmes; cela leur épargne les importunités d'un galant insupportable. Grâce à Dieu et à la froideur de mon sang, j'avoue qu'en cela je vous ressemble. J'aimerais mieux entendre mon chien aboyer après une corneille, qu'un homme me jurer qu'il m'adore.
Bene. God keepe your Ladifhip ftill in that minde fo fome Gentleman or other fhall fcape a predeftinate fcratcht face.	Béné. Dieu vous conserve, madame, dans cette disposition d'esprit! la figure de plus d'un honnête homme échappera par là aux égratignures auxquelles elle était prédestinée.
Beat. Scratching could not make it worfe, and 'twere fuch a face as yours were.	Béat. Si ces figures-là ressemblent à la vôtre, des égratignures ne sauraient les rendre pires qu'elles sont déjà.
Bene. Well, you are a rare Parrat teacher.	Béné. Allons, vous seriez admirable pour instruire un perroquet.
Beat. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beaft of your.	Béat. Un perroquet comme moi vaut bien un magot comme vous.
Bene. I would my horfe had the fpeed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keepe your way a Gods name, I haue done.	Béné. Je souhaiterais à mon palefroi l'agilité de votre langue et une aussi longue haleine; mais je vous laisse j'ai fini.
Beat. You alwaies end with a Iades tricke, I know you of old.[2]	Béat. Vous finissez toujours par une ruade; je vous connais de vieille date.

In Shakespeare's comedy this verbal exchange between Beatrice and Benedick establishes a focal point around which

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[2] A new Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, ed. Horace Howard Furness, vol. 12: Much Adoe Nothing (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott Co., 1899), with the editorial notes of Johnson, Steevens and Reed.

the whole play will revolve. Through their merry war of wits these two anti-romantics instigate the higher level of intellectual mirth and simultaneously expose themselves as characters capable of insight and understanding. In contrast, those preoccupied with themselves and their own self-importance are incapable of true wit. Beatrice and Benedick's use of language satirizes the empty, formalized style employed by the others of Messina, just as their anatagonistic, yet passionate love relations will point up the unreliable, superficial basis by which Claudio seeks a mate.

Their battle of words features first of all the simple level of wit in quick manipulations of language such as the quibble on the word courtesy. Also in this conventional game they indulge in name-calling, ("Ladie Disdaine" and "Parrat teacher"), and in repartee as in the word-play over "scratcht" and "scratching" which they hurl at each other. On a more elaborate level they employ figurative language, involving stock comic associations to do with food and with animals: Beatrice argues that disdain could hardly perish with such nourishment present. She then claims in self-conceit that she would rather hear her dog bark at a crow than listen to a declaration of love. A few lines later Benedick employs a further far fetched comparison in wishing for his horse the speed and staying-power of her tongue. Overall, these two contribute very much to a wit of situation with their opportunist comic inventiveness;

Beatrice finds an opening for addressing Benedick by suggesting to him that his dull-witted remarks are being ignored, and Benedick gains the upper hand at the end of this exchange by getting in the finishing stroke, "I haue done," which she conceeds by calling it a "Iades tricke."

The highlight of Shakespeare's comedy peaks in the exchange of verbal wit that takes place between this pair, Beatrice and Benedick. How did Berlioz seek to transform this verbal wit into a musical selection? What follows is the libretto composed by Berlioz in irregular rhymed verse, incorporating various rhyme schemes.[3] The English translation by David Cairns from the Deutsche Grammophon recording has been included out of interest in order to show the real distance to Shakespeare:

No. 4 - DUO

"Allegro moderato"

BÉATRICE
Comment le dedain pourrait-
il mourir?
Vous êtes vivant!
On le verrait naître
S'il n'existait pas;
Et tant qu'ici-bas
Vous oserez paraître,
Pour son bon plaisir

Il ne voudra pas en sortir.

BÉNÉDICT
Aimable Dédain! on est trop
heureux
D'endurer vos coups.
Aimable Dédain!
Que ne suis-je maître

BEATRICE
Is it possible Disdain
should die,
And you still living?
She must at once be born
Did she not exist;
And so long as on this earth
You presume to show yourself,
She will not forego her
pleasure
By leaving it.

BENEDICK
Dear Disdain! Happy he

That suffers your blows.
Dear Disdain!
Would I were free

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[3] Hector Berlioz, Béatrice et Bénédict, ed. Hugh Macdonald (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1980) vol. 3.

De suivre vos pas!
Oui, tant qu'ici-bas
Vous daignerez paraître
Pour charmer nos yeux,
Qui donc voudrait aller aux cieux?

To follow in your train!
Yes, so long as on this earth
You deign to show yourself
To charm our eyes,
Who would choose to be in heaven?

BÉATRICE
J'ai pitié dé votre ironie

BEATRICE
I am sorry for your irony

BÉNÉDICT
Moi, railler! certes, je le nie.
Mais, franchement, non,
Vous avez raison.
Je suis insensible,
D'humeur inflexible,
Et c'est un vrai bonheur pour nous
Qu'adoré de toutes les femmes,
Enflammant, malgré moi, tant d'âmes,
Je ne sois point aimé de vous.

BENEDICK
I mock? Nay, I deny it,

And yet, in honesty,
You are right.
I am hard-hearted,
Unyielding in humour,
And truly it is fortunate for us
That, though I am adored of all ladies
And despite myself set so many hearts on fire,
I am not loved by you.

BÉATRICE
N'ayez à ce sujet aucune inquiétude.
. . .

BEATRICE
Set your mind at rest on that.
. . .

BÉNÉDICT
De vous déplaire en tout je ferai mon étude.
J'aurais trop de chagrin de vous désespérer.

BENEDICK
I shall study to displease you in all things.
It would grieve me excessively to drive you to despair.

BÉATRICE
Vous pouvez sans effort, seigneur, vous rassurer.

BEATRICE
My lord, you may easily reassure yourself.

"Allegro"

BÉATRICE, BÉNÉDICT
Mais quel plaisir étrange
Trouvé-je à l'irriter!
Comme un coeur qui se venge,

Je sens le mien bondir et palpiter.
Un frisson de colère

BEATRICE, BENEDICK
Why, what curious pleasure
I find in baiting him/her!
I feel my heart leap and bound
As though it were bent on revenge.
A tremor of anger

Me prend quand je le/la vois.	Seizes me when I behold him/her.
Son rire m'exaspère,	His/her laughter maddens me
Et je tremble à sa voix.	And I shake at the sound of his/her voice.

"Andantino non troppo lento"[4]

BÉNÉDICT Dieu du ciel, faites-moi la grâce De ne pas femme m'octroyer, (montrant Béatrice) Blonde surtout!	BENEDICK God in heaven, do me the grace To furnish me with no wife, (indicating Beatrice) Least of all a blond one!
BÉATRICE Quelle menace!	BEATRICE What a warning!
BÉNÉDICT Mieux vaut en enfer m'envoyer.	BENEDICK I'd rather be consigned to hell.
BÉATRICE Dieu du ciel, faites-moi la grâce De ne pas m'imposer d'époux, (montrant Bénédict) Barbu surtout.	BEATRICE God in heaven, do me the grace To lay on me no husband, (indicating Benedick) Least of all one with a beard!
BÉNÉDICT Quelle menace!	BENEDICK What a warning!
BÉATRICE Je le demande à deux genoux.	BEATRICE I ask it on my knees.

In subject matter Berlioz as well proceeded from the image of "Lady Disdain," and the duet is immediately preceded by these words of the spoken interlude: "Eh quoi! Signora Dédain, vous vivez encore?" In general, the spoken parts of this "opéra-comique" rely very heavily upon the Shakespearian text and, in turn, upon Laroche's translation. Béatrice begins singing about disdain, to be answered in

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[4]These tempo indications have been added in order to facilitate future reference to parts of the libretto.

kind by Bénédict. The next portion of their duet introduces the idea of Bénédict being loved by all except Béatrice--again from Shakespeare. Then Berlioz inserted a line to the effect that Bénédict will seek to devote himself to displeasing her which is somewhat apart from the original comedy. With the Allegro section Berlioz went even further in separating his subject matter from the original. The two sing in unison about the strange pleasure they experience in tormenting each other: this sentiment is never openly expressed in the Shakespearian version of the comedy and points up the usual nature of operatic drama to express crystalized states of emotion but not to relate the progress of inner emotional development. Ulrich Weisstein speaks of the "timeless" quality of opera in this regard, as he compares the properties of language and of music in his article, "The Libretto as Literature."[1] This particular scene in Shakespeare marks the initial encounter of Beatrice and Benedick which will be followed by others, as well as by the network of influence established as they interact with other characters in the play. All of this prepares the two main characters for their ultimate emotional commitment. In Berlioz's work, the end of their relationship must already be foreshawdowed in this beginning encounter since they will only be allowed a final moment together and that as the concluding number of "opéra-comique."

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[1] U. Wesstein, "The Libretto as Literature," Books Abroad (1961), p. 18.

In this way another feature of Berlioz's libretto writing comes to light and that is to combine with one scene, ideas that may have surfaced elsewhere in the comedy. For example, in the slow section of the duet which bears tempo indication, "Andantino non troppo lento," Berlioz offered a mock prayer on the part of Bénédict and then Béatrice, which is really a variation on a conversation from Shakespeare's comedy, (act 2, scene 1), that Beatrice holds with her uncle, Leonato, as she says:

> Iuft, if he fend me no husband, for which bleffsing,
> I am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening:
> Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on
> his face, I had rather lie in the woollen!
> (2. 1. 27-30)

Part of Béatrice's sung plea to heaven then, is to not be landed with a bearded husband. Bénédict has first implored the powers that be to spare him from a blond wife: this is, in fact, not contained in Shakespeare since there Bénédict, expounding upon desired qualities for a future wife, has been specific on everything but the hair colour: ". . . and her hair shall be of what colour it please God" (2. 3. 36). The specifying of hair colour would seem to have been done for expediency's sake since Berlioz needed a parallel feature to the beard, rejected by Béatrice as symbol of the male sex.

The idea of being sent to hell rather than undergo such a marriage can again be found in Shakespeare's comedy but with necessary modifications. In the first scene of act two, Benedick delivers a lengthy harangue to Leonato on the

places he would rather visit than speak three words to Beatrice:

> Will your grace command me any feruice to worldes end? I will go ont the flighteft arrand now to the Antypodes that you can deuife to fend mee on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furtheft inch of Afia: bring you the length of Prefter Iohns foot: fetch you a haire off the great Chams beard: doe you any emballage to the Pigmies, rather than holde three words conference, with this harpy, you haue no imployment for me?
>
> (2. 1. 272-279)

It is obvious that the verbal configurations and figurative embellishment of the original text must be condensed into a capsular idea which will then be exposed to musical variation. However, as the earthiness of Shakespeare's wit is left off by Berlioz, the resulting comedy of the "opéra-comique" is much less of the realistic, Renaissance style and much more of the Romantic variety which sought to transcend the world of experience in a blend with romance at the one extreme and irony at the other. Conrad refers to the Romantic tendency towards paradox: "Romantic literary forms have an instinct for turning into their opposites, attaining freedom by self-contradiction."[4]

The nature of comic subject matter dictates to the composer certain external features of musical structure. First of all, Berlioz chose the key of E major, a major key being an obvious choice over minor. As far as the expressive qualities of E itself, A. E. F. Dickinson has made the suggestion in his work, The Music of Berlioz, that Berlioz regarded this key suitable for a more triumphant sound than

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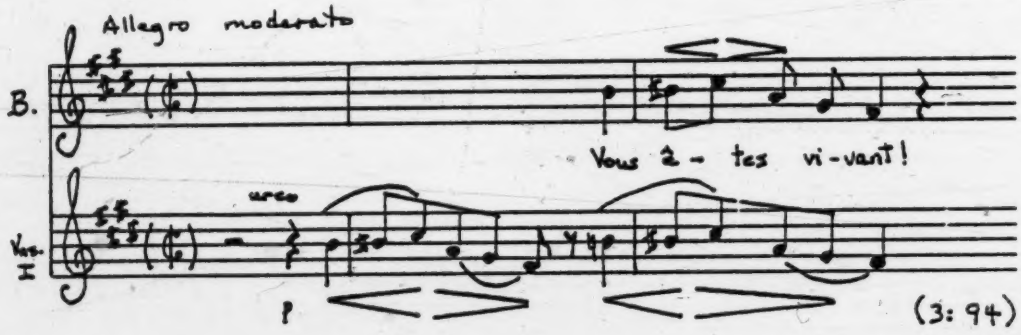
[4] Conrad, Romantic Opera and Literary Form, p. 32.

other major keys, mentioning its use in the wrestler's dance of Les Troyens, Act One, and the jubilant war-cry of Act Three of the same opera.' If not of battle, certainly there is a hint of confrontation in this duet as Béatrice and Bénédict pit their forces to antagonize each other.

The opening section of the duet is marked "Allegro moderato" suggesting a lively, but moderate tempo to the music. Béatrice sings a solo entry and is then answered by Bénédict with the same tune and more or less a repeat of the ideas. What results is a bantering style of repartee which is encourged by the role of the orchestral accompaniment. The melody for Béatrice's second phrase, "Vous êtes vivant!," is first heard from the string section--



--so that when Béatrice sings it, it is already reduced to the role of an echo which contributes to the teasing and mocking atmosphere being conveyed. The chromaticism enhances the word painting.

The opening phrase, "Comment le dédain," takes the form of an ascending scale of eighth notes arriving at the half

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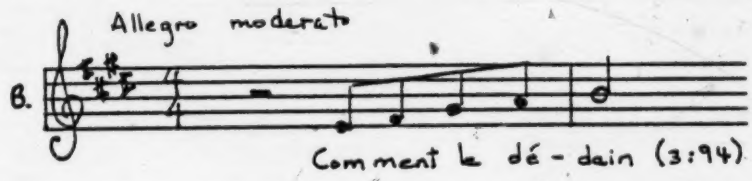
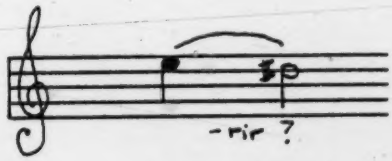
'A. E. F. Dickinson, The Music of Berlioz (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), p. 252.

note on B corresponding to the syllabic stress on "-dain":



With the next phrase, "pourrait-il mourir?," the running eighth notes continue to complete the octave to E which falls in suspension to D. The melodic line, then, is characterized by a light-heartedness rendered by movement in running-note pattern or by relatively small interval jumps, but with enough harmonic interest to establish it as a cantabile rather than a recitative style. The soprano line becomes quite colourful as Béatrice sings "Il ne voudra pas en sortir" to a descending line of eighth-note pairs. Perhaps the comic subject matter caused Berlioz to relax his abhorence of the showiness of Italian-style vocalization and to bow to what would please a crowd.

The back and forth badinage is strengthened by the antithetic imagery of dying and living: "mourir/vivant." Berlioz suggested this by placing both words at the ends of phrases and then varying the musical means for stressing them. The second syllable of "mourir" is accented by the use of an appoggiatura note ornamentation:



The second time "vivant" is sung, the second stressed

syllable is approached from above, from the interval of a third, which gives the effect of landing securely on the note, thereby stressing its declamation:

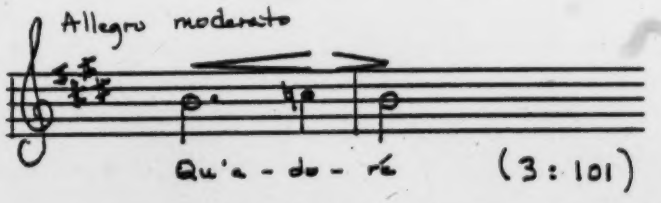
The playful skips and lack of dissonance add to the irony. Bénédict's entry also establishes the mood of antithesis as he sings, "aimable dédain."

The only musical thickening of tension in this first section is produced in the musical treatment of the phrase, "Il ne voudra pas" which is presented in a sequential pattern first beginning on B, then on C. The overall movement is upwards to the climactic G sharp sung by Béatrice as she concludes her opening solo.

The orchestral accompaniment plays a large role in producing comic effect in this musical work. The score is full of grace-note figures, trills and pizzicato notes that remind a listener of the lack of seriousness and ressemble a laughing comment to the proceedings on stage. As Béatrice repeats the first line, "Comment le dédain pourrait-il mourir" to a new melodic idea in the minor key of B minor, the string section takes up a triplet figure pattern moving upward gradually by semitone movement about the ascending notes. The triplet at this tempo always conveys a playfulness and a dance-like mood. The string section then takes up sixteenth-note runs, again adding brightness and

contributing to the upward trend of Béatrice's solo part. Bénédict's sequential phrase for the words "Qui donc, qui donc voudrait," is set off by triplet-figure arpeggios played in the upper registers on flute and clarinet which gives an ethereal reflection to his mock rejection of heaven for the sake of Lady Disdain's presence.

Bénédict sings his counterpart of this opening portion of the duet, followed by a short recitative passage as a transition to the development of a second melodic idea in the Allegro moderato. The key feature of this recitative style is the placing by Berlioz of key words at the beginning of the bar and at a high pitch. Bénédict sings out "Moi" to a dotted quarter note on C; and even more striking is the way he sings out the word "non" on a high F. Bénédict leads off this second melodic idea with the words "Je suis insensible," the word "suis" being stretched over the interval jump from E to A, exaggerating the importance of the word "suis" but thereby contributing to an image of self-importance and conceit, as he in fact goes on to sing of his adoration from all women except her. A similar crescendo occurs on the word, "Qu'adoré":



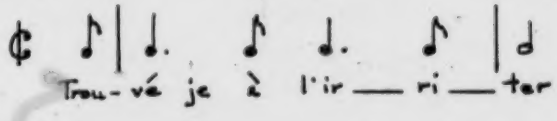
Bénédict's opening phrase here is accompanied and echoed by the strings and in particular the viola, sounding somewhat melodramatic but in fact issuing a sarcastic gloss to his

pompous line.

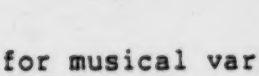
Béatrice's reply is meant to mock as she sings the words, "N'ayez à ce sujet aucune inquiétude"; musically, the interval of the fourth from Bénédict's line, "Je suis insensible," is taken as a motif to be developed at half speed with her half notes in place of his quarter notes. The extended time sense lends a drawn-out and therefore exaggerated expression to her reply. Her part is accompanied by a series of trills in the string section, such twittering bird-like sounds seeming to mock her preponderant vocal line.

With the switch into the Allegro section we find Berlioz projecting a more aggressive sound: the tempo indication "Allegro" prescribes a quick pace and the 4/4 time signature has been retained to provide for forward movement and even a suggestion of agitation. The two voice parts now sing in unison, thus making a more assertive statement as to their condition: Béatrice and Bénédict here move together in order to agree on one thing--that they enjoy irritating each other and participating in this battle of wits. They have professed absolute antagonism to the idea of marriage, but this Allegro section provides proof to the statement that the opposite of love would not be such an agitated, spirited expression of hate but rather a cool indifference. Berlioz gave expression in this Allegro to their total lack of indifference: the pair are very much engaged. Berlioz took advantage of pronounced rhythmic

patterns to correspond to some of the key words in the passage. For example, the words, "Trouvé je à l'irriter" is sung to the following note pattern:



In the following phrase the word "coeur" coincides with the longest note in the musical phrase which again features the dotted quarter note ending:

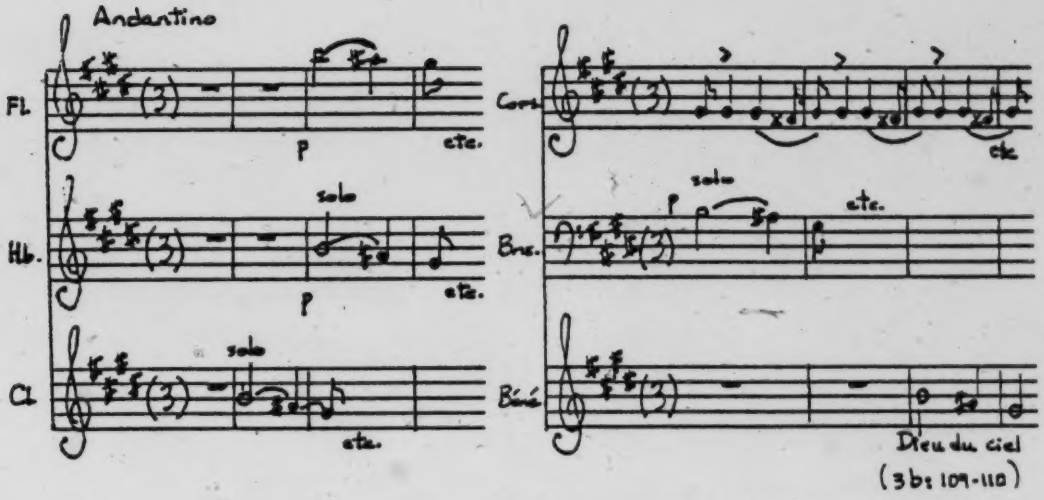


The ultimate word for musical variation is the "tremble" of the final line of this section: it always receives the long half note, first in high position, then low, and finally on a high F. In the finale of the duet which is a repeat and an elaboration of this Allegro, the word "tremble" is additionally trilled on and sung to an octave scale passage, amounting to an effective example of word painting. The effect here, though, is ironic because of the discrepancy between the serious meaning of the word "tremble" and the absolute lack of seriousness in the way Béatrice and Bénédict are using it.

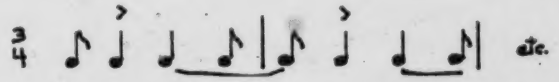
In the libretto Berlioz set up a mélange of feelings ranging from pleasure to irritation, from anger to laughter. Béatrice and Bénédict are ensnared in a chaotic state of emotion which is aptly expressed by the impetuous nature of

this piece. The melody proceeds throughout by a jerky rhythm, unchallenged by the orchestral accompaniment which supplies a steady sound of two sixteenth notes alternating with eighth-note rests, or a repeating triplet figure on single notes. The result is an accompaniment that truly stays in the background.

The Allegro is followed by a slow moving section with the tempo indication, "Andantino non troppo lento"--a moderate speed but not too slow. Berlioz switched the time signature to 3/4 which allows for a more sustained flow of the musical line as only the initial beat in the bar is felt. The switch in tempo is accompanied by a change to the minor key of G sharp. With these changes Berlioz introduced an element of discrepancy: the audience is faced with the same pair of antagonistic lovers, what then explains the slow tempo and minor key? The answer lies in the mock prayer addressed by Bénédict and Béatrice to heaven ("Dieu du ciel") to be spared from marrying, especially if the mate be blond or have a beard. The mocking style is introduced by the wind section of the orchestra which makes a fugue-like entry with the notes B to A sharp announced by the bassoon, echoed by the clarinets and finally by the flutes and oboes in unison with the voice entry of Bénédict:



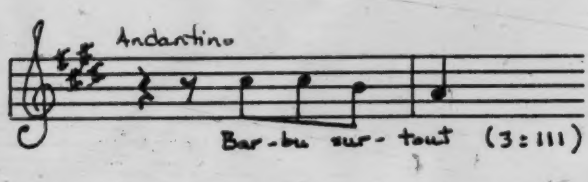
Berlioz rarely employed the fugue with serious intent but only to satirize its over-structured use. Tension is also tempered here by playing over the barline. Another hint as to the mocking intent of Berlioz at this point is the syncopated accent, featured in the horn part which keeps up the following rhythm for nine bars:



This creates the impression of being out of step and offsets the slow, heavy character of the vocal line.

Comedy in general relies upon moments of surprise, and Berlioz capitalized on this with the word "blonde" which, in an unprepared fashion, is suddenly sung out by Bénédict as he lands on the high note of F sharp, sustaining it for two beats, at the same time pointing to Béatrice. When Béatrice reciprocates with her line, "Barbu surtout," Berlioz employed a different technique for surprise by having

Béatrice sing the words in broken eighth notes,



again altering the character of the mournful prayer tone. These two outbursts are answered by the other singing "Quelle menace!" in very sarcastic tones and a pizzicato comment from the strings.

Béatrice sings the final note of the Andantino section, a C sharp and instead of an expected diminuendo, builds to a crescendo. From this point the C resolves to a B and to a return to the Allegro in E major. After reintroducing the Allegro once, Berlioz concluded the duet with a stetto-style ending: Bénédict begins softly, or "sotto voce," with the phrase "comme un coeur qui se venge" but before he finishes, the musical line is taken up Béatrice, involving an overlapping and interweaving of the voice parts as they build toward the climax of the final line, "je tremble à sa voix." Musically, the stretto treatment increases the tension and anticipation of the listener and makes a very effective ending to the duet. As an extension of the libretto there is no better way to convey the effect of disjointedness, for Béatrice and Bénédict are not yet willing to exist in unison and harmony.

Thus, this analysis shows the distinctive part played by the three tempo changes in Berlioz's attempt to find a musical equivalent for Shakespeare's comedy. The blithe

tones of the initial Allegro moderato express well the basic comedy of situation with Béatrice and Bénédict armed for their verbal skirmish. The music complies with all the tricks of rhythm, melodic line and ways of emphasizing words that provide a light-hearted atmosphere. With the change to an upbeat Allegro Berlioz created a new vantage point from which to reflect on the opening section. The voice parts take the lead with Béatrice and Bénédict singing together and confessing their mutual involvement. They part again for the slower Andantino in order to continue their battle of repartee. This third stance takes the form of a mock prayer. All three sections taken together are different moments about a revolving axis of the Béatric-Bénédict relationship, presented reflexively rather than in ongoing progression. The variety of this duet complex is complemented by the necessary amount of muscial repetition provided by Berlioz.

CHAPTER 12

Operatic Attempt at Romantic Irony

The theory of Romantic irony was developed largely by Friedrich Schlegel who used the phrase in his theoretical writings after 1797. Schlegel understood irony as no longer confined to its classical concept as a rhetorical figure: i.e., the discrepancy between a spoken word and its intended meaning. The development of the European novel had already seen irony be extended to a basic narrative outlook in such works as Cervantes' Don Quixote. With the addition of the adjective "Romantic" theorists such as Friedrich Schlegel wished to elaborate upon the philosophical content of Romantic irony. On the technical side, the concept of Romantic irony suggests a self-reflexive situation in which the artist takes an objective, critical look at his own creation. Implied is the constant evolving of a state of artistic creation alternating with artistic self-criticism: "dass die romantische Poesie . . . das entwerfende Vermögen (Genialität) und das urteilende Vermögen (Kritik) ständig miteinander mischt und verquickt, . . ."[1] The Romantic writer should never become embedded in uninspired equilibrium. He is able to determine the nature of his own

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[1] H. Weinrich, "Ironie," Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, ed. J. Ritter and K. Gründer, Vol. 4 (Basel : Schwabe, 1976), p. 579.

creation; he can also through a type of transcendental buffoonery rise above his own creation to deal with the universal tension that exists between the indeterminate and determinate. The result is an emphasis upon the individuality of the creating artist and also upon his ability to turn as critic and reflect upon his own creation. This dualistic stance of subjectivity and objectivity embodies a basic tenet of Romanticism. The mirroring of the artist and of his creation in Romantic irony is symbolic for the metaphysical tension that Romanticists experienced between idealism and reality, between the indeterminate and the determinate.

In his book on irony, Ernst Behler speaks of Romantic irony expressing a middle position between enthusiasm and skepsis: "Genauer betrachtet besteht demnach die Ironie . . . in einer vermittelnden Zwischenstellung zwischen Enthusiasmus und Skepsis."[2] From the vantage point of a comparative study between music and literature, this chapter will explore the literary concept of Romantic irony as transferable into the discipline of music. Rey M. Longyear has made the attempt in an article on Beethoven,[3] but does not seem to penetrate beyond musical effects which are in fact humoristic. A most insightful approach has been pursued

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[2] Ernst Behler, Klassische Ironie, Romantische Ironie, Tragische Ironie (Darmstadt: Wissenchaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), p.67.

[3] Rey M. Longyear, "Beethoven and Romantic Irony," The Musical Quarterly, LVI, 4 (October, 1970), pp. 647-664.

by Jean-Pierre Barricelli,[4] who defines the term thoroughly and investigates it through the medium of musical sounds on their own. In my opinion, a "Gesamtkunstwerk" such as an opera greatly enhances the capacity of music to create a situation of Romantic irony. Through the external features of stage setting and libretto text, operatic music offers the added perspective of public reaction in achieving the self-judgement that Romantic irony implies.

In Shakespeare's comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, the self-conscious verbal wit of Beatrice and Benedick is offset by the low comic style of the nightwatchmen, Dogberry and Verges. Equipped with lanterns, Dogberry and crew try to find their way through the darkness of night and symbolically through the web of their own confused and witless malapropisms. Their dramatic function is tied to the evil intrigues of Don John, both in offering comic relief to his nastiness and in naively causing his conviction. With the total omission of this darker side of Shakespeare's comedy involving Don John, Berlioz was faced with the option of retaining a figure such as Dogberry for straightforward buffoonery, or to seek some alternative solution in complying with "opéra-comique's" requirement for a stock comic character.

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[4] Jean-Pierre Barricelli, "Musical Forms of Romantic Irony." In: Frederick Garber, Ed. Romantic Irony. Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986, in press [MS. used with the author's permission]).

With his own quick sense of wit Berlioz saw an opportunity for much more: he created the personage of the conductor, Somarone, the name derived from the Italian word for "big donkey." Somarone is introduced into the "opéra-comique," Béatrice et Bénédict, in the twelfth scene, along with a group of singers and musicians who are rehearsing a nuptial hymn for the wedding of Claudio and Hero. The rehearsing and singing of this hymn, "Epithalame grotesque," form numbers six and six-a of the work. In his book on Berlioz, Hugh Macdonald states that the figure of Somarone is derived from Shakespeare's Balthasar who enters to sing and play in act two, scene three of Much Ado About Nothing, in order to entertain the three gentlemen, Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato, as they plot a gulling of Benedick.[5] Balthasar's appearance is so brief as to be contained in standard editions within lines forth-five to ninety of this scene, of which lines sixty-four to seventy-eight are the actual song he performs. As far as his spoken dialogue is concerned one would characterize Balthasar by his obsequious but moreover very smooth manner of talking which includes the following clever pun:

> Note this before my notes,
> Theres not a note of mine thats worth the noting.
> (2. 3. 57-58)

To which Don Pedro replies:

> Why thefe are very crotchets that he fpeakes,
> Note notes forfooth, and nothing.
> (2. 3. 59-60)

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[5] Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 178.

This pun offers one possible explanation for the meaning of "nothing" as it appears in the title of the comedy. Rather than the transformation of one character, Somarone would appear to be a synthesis, showing the good-natured bumbling style of Dogberry as well as some evidence of Balthasar's ability to pun.

With the figure of Somarone Berlioz allowed himself an outlet for alluding topically to the type of musician on the contemporary scene that he so despised: it was the taste for mediocre composition and the imperviousness to recognizing the genius of greater talents. Somarone primes his choristers and instrumentalists for rehearsing the epithalamium with the words: "Mesdames et Messieurs, . . . le morceau que vous allez avoir l'honneur d'exécuter est un chef-d'oeuvre! . . . Commençons!" (3 : 148). These words on the surface seem to suggest a conductor with an inflated opinion of himself, but they are allegedly a quote from Gasparo Spontini as he commenced a performance of his opera, Olympie, during Berlioz's time. A situation of paradox begins to emerge in the characterization of Somarone: on the one hand he is overtly being criticized by Berlioz, especially in the spoken dialogue of scene thirteen which occurs between the two performances of the "Epithalame grotesque," numbers six and six-a of the "opéra-comique." In order to improve the first rendering of the nuptial hymn Somarone scribbles a few notes in pencil on the manuscript which evolves into the famous oboe solo of the second

rendering. When the oboist executes this at sight rather successfully, Somarone promises to include a saltarello, (a Roman dance form with sudden skips), to be written especially for him in the composer's next big mass. The irony of juxtaposing musical forms of such diverse social and spiritual contexts makes a rather derisive statement as to the source of musical inspiration and subsequent composition!

Somarone then calls for his special ducal baton, "Number thirty-seven," as he prepares to perform the composition for Don Pedro: "C'est le bâton, Monseigneur, dont je me sers devant les personnes . . . les personnes de qualité, dans les circonstances . . . solennelles. . ." (3 : 153). This as well casts aspersion on the conductor who places importance on the baton he uses and the audience for whom he plays rather than being totally engrossed in the music he is conducting. It would seem to contain, however, a second reference to Spontini for whose operatic style Berlioz in his Mémoires expressed continuing admiration and whom he openly credited with influencing his own art of expressive orchestration. After Spontini's death Berlioz was presented by his widow on the occasion of a performance from La Vestale in 1852 with the baton used by Spontini in conducting the operas of Gluck and Mozart.[4] The other side of Berlioz's treatment of Somarone thus comes to light: there is in it an ironic connection to Berlioz himself.

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[4] W. J. Turner, Berlioz. The Man and His Work (New York: Vienna House, 1934), p. 262.

This self-reference surfaces as well in the image that arises as Somarone confronts his group of musicians whom Berlioz satirized even more severely. They must be reminded to face the conductor, and one particularly obstinate player must be sarcastically reprimanded by Somarone as follows: "Bon! il me tourne le dos. Mais, malheureux, comment verras-tu la mesure?. . . . Il faudra donc que je te la batte sur la tête ou sur les épaules?. . ." (3 : 148). The conductor himself corrects the position of the chairs. He then has difficulty in achieving the same note "la" demanded from the two oboe players, to which Somarone with a play on his own name exclaims: "Il y a de quoi déchirer des oreilles d'âne." (3 : 148). This all directly reflects Berlioz's own experiences in conducting very recalcitrant and unmusical orchestras in Paris (cf. Les Soirées d'orchestre), and also his relations with the motley crews of musicians that were assembled in various German cities as he toured around conducting his own works (cf. Voyages en Allemagne). What is evolving, then, is not a cold, rational satire of Somarone but Berlioz animating his own work through the conductor figure: he was playing both with what he abhored and with what was dearest to him and in so doing he was exhibiting traits of Romantic irony.

The circle of composer, performers and audience is completed after the first singing of the "Epithalame grotesque" as Somarone turns to the choristers and says: "Ah! mon Dieu! vous me beuglez cet épithalame comme un De

profundis! Vous ne comprenez donc pas ... ce. . . ce chef-d'oeuvre?. . ."(3 : 153). His criticism of their interpretation of his work is later seconded by Bénédict after the repeat performance, which gave Berlioz occasion to align his work with the Shakespearian text momentarily; otherwise, this whole episode with Somarone was of his own invention. In the original, Benedick comments on Balthasar's song as follows: "An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him: and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief." (2. 3. 81-85). Berlioz's text contains a close translation in Bénédict's evaluation of the epithalamium: "Si mes chiens avaient hurlé de la sorte, je les aurais pendus sans miséricorde. Pourvu que ces voix discordantes ne me présagent pas quelque malheur!" (3 : 160).

Commenting on music was one thing; but what really frustrated Berlioz during his career as composer and conductor was the total lack of understanding. Somarone has accused his choristers of missing the point of this wedding song by making it too lugubrious, and Berlioz inserted after the final singing of the epithalamium a very pointed depiction of a listener's ignorance. Don Pedro holds forth to Somarone on the music as being". . . excellente . . . savante. . ." (3 : 159), but then admits to Claudio in an aside that he has understood none of it: "Je n'y ai rien compris." Such false pretence even increases the impact of ignorance of musical matters.

Just as Berlioz let slip certain characteristics that implicate him in the characterization of Somarone, so also could his audience have seen a reflection of themselves in the words of Don Pedro. It would appear that Berlioz staged this scene with Somarone not just as a parody on conducting and composing, but also on performing and on listening. In other words, Berlioz set up a play-within-a-play in order that his audience would appreciate this staging of the rehearsal with Somarone as a mirror reflection of what Berlioz considered to be their own situations respectively and a means to exposing the inner truths involved in the music world.

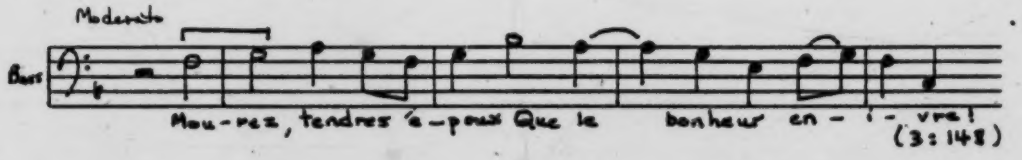
It is now important to consider the musical work itself that Berlioz composed to fit in with this comic interlude of Somarone, in order to justify these claims made concerning the presence of Romantic irony in Béatrice et Bénédict. The first hint as to Berlioz's intention is contained in the title, "Epithalame grotesque." An epithalamium according to the Oxford dictionary is a nuptial song or poem, but it is very unusual for it to gain the descriptive quality of being grotesque or ludicrous. Berlioz's title features the juxtaposition of the ultraserious with a hint of the ironic or the comic and is reminiscent of the Romantic predilection for dualistic terms and for forms like the grotesque. Such terms arise from the basic duality of pitting man's feeling against his reason. This juxtaposition of the serious and the comic has already been prepared by Somarone, as

mentioned above, when he announces a masterpiece, ("chef-d'oeuvre"), to be performed by musicians who do not pay attention and cannot find the right note!

The words of Berlioz's libretto for his "Epithalame grotesque" conform to the spirit of paradox:

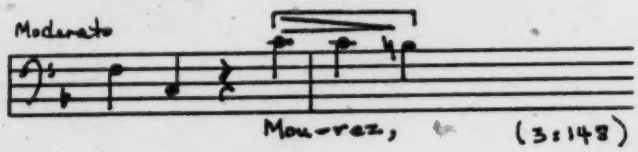
> Mourez, tendres époux
> Que le bonheur enivre!
> Mourez, mourez!
> Pourquoi survivre
> A des instants si doux?
> Qu'une mort bien heureuse
> Descende paisible sur vous
> Comme la nuit calme et rêveuse!
>
> (3 : 148-153)

The whole text of the song deals with dying and the eternal night of death. Don Pedro, though not very astute on musical matters, is quick to point out the absurdity of such a text in a wedding song, when he comments to Somarone after the second performance: "Comment? 'mourez' Il ne faut pas que les époux meurent! Quelles diables de paroles est-ce là?" (3 : 159). On this level Somarone is being satirized for producing this pathetic greeting to the nuptial pair that can only speak of dying. Musically, Berlioz clearly found means to exaggerate the expression of the words. The opening word sung in the fugal subject is "Mou-rez" by the bass voices at half note value:

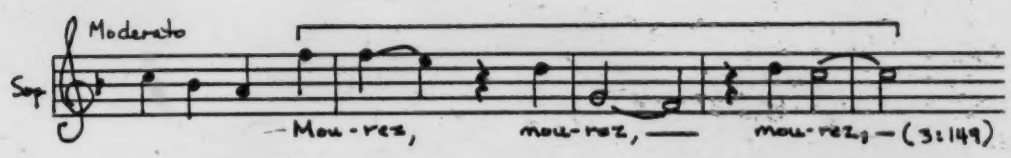


This same entry will then be heard by the three other voice parts in the following order: soprano, alto and finally

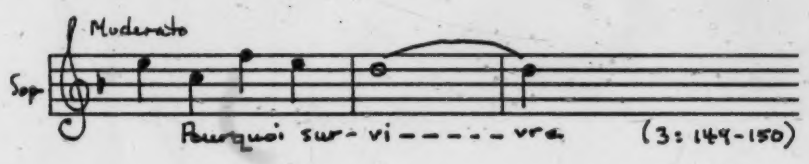
tenor. But first the alto voice has introduced a second fugue subject with the words, "Tendres époux,--mourez, mourez, etc....", which is imitated by tenor, bass and soprano. It is a very complex musical structure, increasing the irony of the situation. The word "mourez" is also featured in a suspended note pattern sung on high notes which automatically draws special attention to the words sung:



The decrescendo mark from the C to the B natural suggests a fading of tone from the first syllable of the word, "mou-rez" to the second syllable which contributes to the effect of word painting. Such word painting, typical for madrigalism, calls for the word "mourez" to be accompanied by a "dying" in volume and a descending in pitch dissonance. In the rendering of the first three lines of the libretto, the word "mourez" is basically used by any of the four voices as an accompanying part when they are not specifically singing one of the fugal subjects. This exploitation of the word "mourez" casts aspersion on the musical composition itself and continues the dualistic stance between creation and self-criticism. Note the repetition of the word by the soprano part after its first singing of subject one:

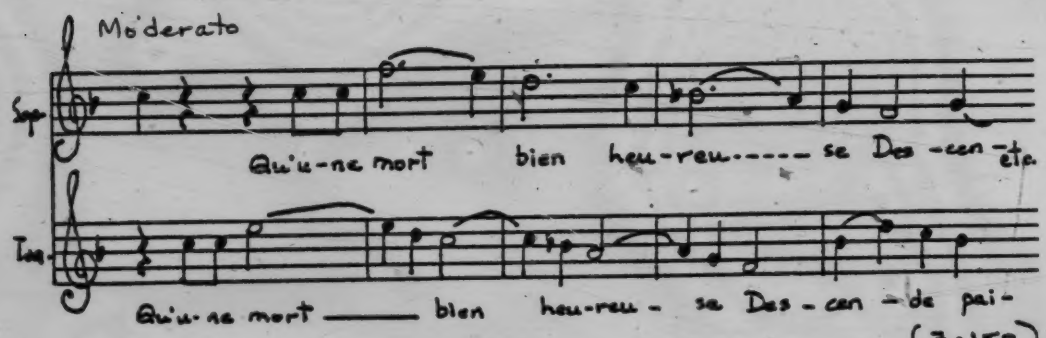


From the second idea of the libretto, "Pourquoi survivre/A des instants si doux," it is the word "sur-vivre" that is held for a full measure of four beats plus beat one of the following bar:



Again, emphasis on the notion of survival--which is even questioned--lends a rather ironical twist to a nuptial message. In Berlioz's own case, the bonds of matrimony to Harriet Smithson did not weather well the storms presented by their respective artistic careers, he being a musician, and she, an actress.

The last three lines of the passage begin by stressing the word "mort." This was done by Berlioz not only by placing it on a high note and extending the time value to that of a dotted half note; as well the sound is approached from below by two eighth notes, a procedure which lends additional exposure to the note. In Berlioz's special fugal style the line is repeated by the soprano voice after the tenor in a overlapping, stretto-like manner, such immediate repetition increasing the intensity of the music and text:



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As the melodic line descends from the high note, it accompanies the idea from the text of a happy death descending peacefully upon the lovers: this is a good example of word painting but only in a Romantic context where no contradiction was felt to exist in speaking of a happy death. Such word pairing as "une mort bien heureuse" and "la nuit calme rêveuse" remind us of such a Romantic poet as Novalis who in his Hymnen an die Nacht evoked images of the sweet, ardent bliss of death that would preserve a wedding night for eternity. Also, the Wagnerian ideal of "Liebestod" comes to mind from an opera such as Tristan und Isolde in which readiness for death is interwoven with the love ecstasy. Objectively Berlioz created the personage of Somarone in order to poke fun at the compromising style of such a conductor and to ridicule the inappropriateness of his musical offering. But later in the "opéra-comique" we find Berlioz dipping into the same fount of Romanticism as he indulges in the composition of a "Duo (Nocturne)" which as number eight occurs just before the Entr'acte of Béatrice et Bénédict. This duet, sung by Héro and Ursula, was particularly appreciated by German audiences and according

to Hugues Imbert, accounted for the success of the "opéra-comique" after its debut in Baden-Baden.[7] Beginning with the line "Nuit paisible et sereine!" the text for this duet really amounts to a hymn to night and to nature. Overall, the imagery is positive as Héro has first proclaimed the depth of her love for Claudio--which marks a reversal of the stance taken in Shakespeare where it is Claudio who is expressive of his state of mind--although ending with the melancholy line, "Et meurt dans un soupir." This duet must be taken as evidence of how deeply Berlioz was rooted in the spirit of Romanticism since there was no justification for it from Shakespeare's comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, either in the line of a straight transfer of subject matter or in serving a dramatic function in the "opéra-comique." Thus, Berlioz's criticism of Somarone must be understood as self-reflexive comment on his own inspirations as a Romantic composer and points up the constantly evolving tension between creation and criticism suggested by Romantic irony.

Returning to the "Epithalame grotesque" we have seen how the text of the libretto through its title and its distorted use of words disrupts the illusion of a wedding song: let us now investigate Berlioz's employment of scene and music from this point of view to complete the study of his operatic technique. Berlioz brought Somarone onto the stage in scene twelve of his "opéra-comique," followed by

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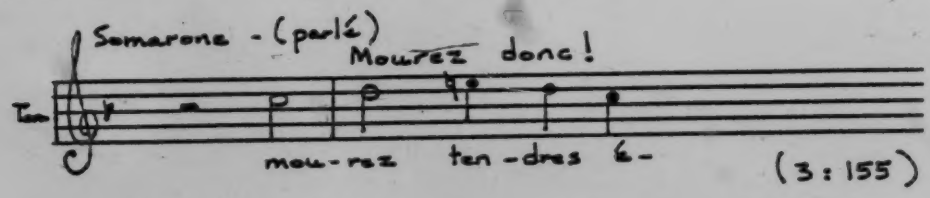
[7] Hugues Imbert, Symphonie (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1891), p. 140.

the oboe and bassoon players who also are placed directly on the stage for this number, the "Epithalame grotesque." In this way they momentarily become actors in the dramatic play of the work, drawing attention to the actual composing and performing of music. The audience is made very conscious of the fact that it is seeing a rehearsal in progress; the illusion of hearing music performed as a finished product is broken. The conventions of musical performance are being exposed and commented upon, the machinery of composing and conducting has been unmasked in a mirroring of Berlioz's own experiences as a composer.

To remove all doubt as to his intention Berlioz had Somarone calling out instructions to his musicians in the second rendering of the number. The effect of his spoken dialogue pitted against the singing of his choristers is a jarring one and destroys the musical illusion. With the tenors' first singing of the fugal subject one, Somarone calls out "Die, for goodness sake!":



It is not clear from the score whether his remark is intended to bring the other voice parts to a quieter tone level or amounts to an exclamation of Somarone's dissatisfaction with his singers' performance, i.e., "drop dead!": in either event, the word play is comic and should have prevented any serious interpretation of the

epithalamium. Somarone's remarks bring to mind the spirit of disillusionment that pervades much of Berlioz's writing, for example, Les Grotesques de la musique.

Berlioz purposefully chose the musical form of the fugue in which to cast the epithalamium. At the conclusion of its performance in Béatrice et Bénédict Somarone informs Don Pedro of the work being a fugue and gives the following explanation for using that particular musical form: "Le mot fugue veut dire fuite, et j'ai fait une fugue à deux sujets, à deux thèmes, pour faire songer les deux époux à la fuite du temps," (3 : 159). Normally the term "fugue," from the Latin word "fuga," is understood to suggest in polyphonic composition the entry of a theme or subject in one voice part and then its imitation in another. Somarone's metaphorical use of the term reminding the lovers of the passage of time again offers an ironic twist to the wedding wish. To some extent the transitory nature of man's happiness is also revealed in the closing scene of Shakespeare's comedy when Benedick calls for music: "Come, come, we are friends: let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels." (5. 4. 119-121). But here it is a glorification of the present reality rather than any hint of Romantic melancholy that would link the flight of time directly with night and with death.

Berlioz's dislike of the fugue form dated from his early days at the Paris Conservatoire where he was taught

the arts of counterpoint and fugue by Anton Reicha. An even greater exponent of an absolute adherence to strict laws of fugal composition was Luigi Cherubini who took over as director of the Conservatoire in 1822 and who outspokenly berated Berlioz for his refusal to pay due respect to the conventional composition of fugues. Berlioz admitted the possibility of an effective use of the fugal form, allowing rich expression in the sense of words and in orchestral writing, when he cited in his Mémoires an example from his composition teacher, Jean-François Lesueur.[8] But it was the more banal and mediocre fugues, that consisted of a preponderant vocalizing on a single word such as "Amen" or on a phrase repeated over and over, that caused Berlioz to lead a lifelong feud against such conventionality and, in his opinion, sacrilege: "Ces fugues monstreuses, qui, par leur ressemblance avec les vociférations d'une troupe d'ivrognes, paraissent n'être qu'une parodie impie du texte et du style sacrés, . . . "[9] He referred to such fugues as "fugues de tavernes et de mauvais lieux."[10]

As mentioned above in Somarone's remark to Don Pedro, the fugue has two subjects or themes to match the two lovers, Héro and Claudio. The first entry of subject one is stated by the bass voices in the tonic key of F major and later on the dominant before the conclusion of this opening

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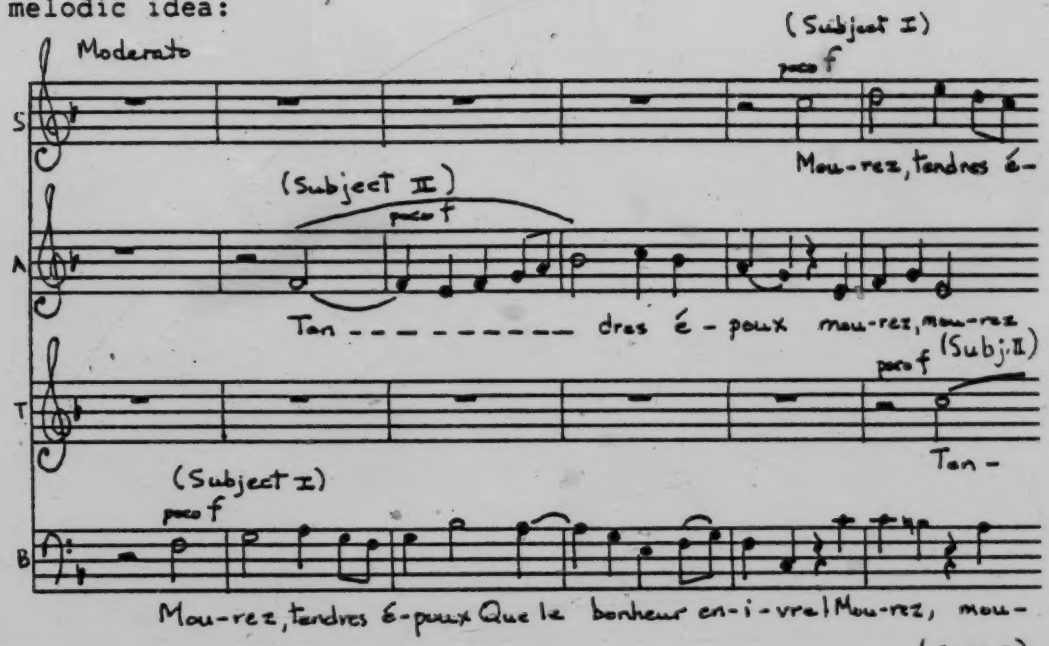
[8] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 45.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 46.

melodic idea:



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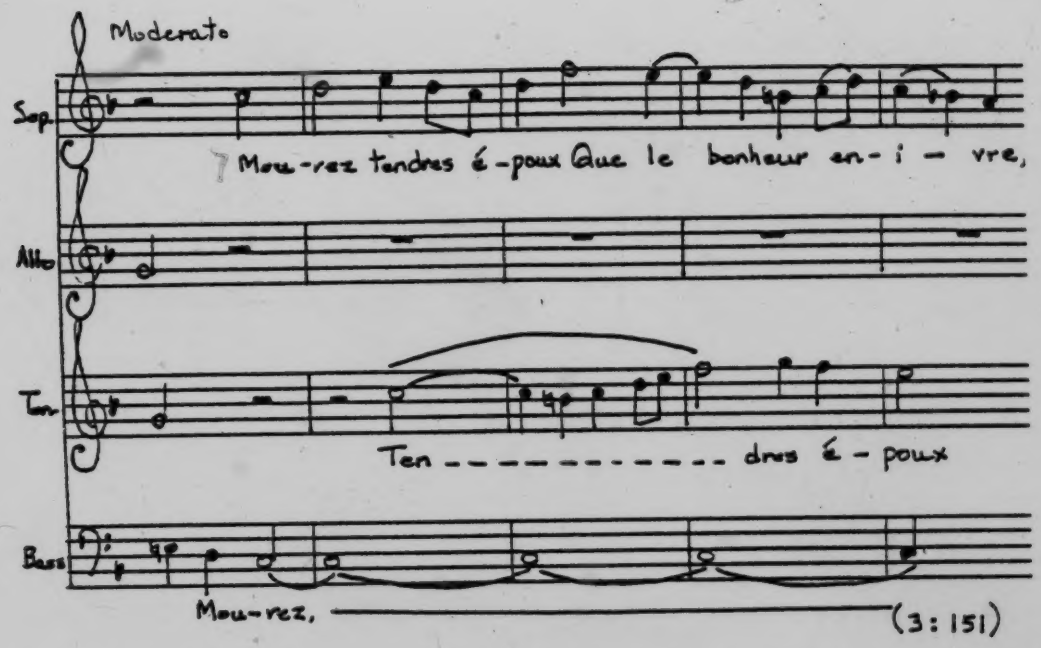
The soprano voice part then makes an answering statement of the subject on the dominant before returning to the home key of F major. A corresponding entry of the third and fourth voice parts, i.e., alto and tenor, would have amounted to a normal enunciation or exposition which is understood in musical analysis as the first part of a conventional fugue. Berlioz, however, before the soprano entry of subject one, has already introduced a second subject which is sung by the alto voices to the words of the text, "tendres époux, mourez, mourez," as seen in the above excerpt of the musical score. The second subject is then answered by the tenor voice, starting on the dominant. This announcement of a second subject would appear to cause some confusion because it really, musically, serves the function of a counter-subject, that is, it provides an accompanying voice

to the main melodic line of subject one. And apart from it, there is really no other identifiable melodic idea other than three or four-note murmurings for the word, "Mou-rez." The musical equivalent for this ironic message to the nuptial pair in the end involved Berlioz in a "textbook" fugue with two subjects.

As Berlioz moved on to the next two lines of the libretto, ("Pourquoi survivre/A des instants si doux?"), the use of fugal texture continues: the soprano and alto parts sing in harmony, echoed then by the tenor and bass. With the words, "Qu'une mort," a canon-like entry is made by the tenors, followed by the sopranos with the other two voices keeping silent for five and a half bars, and is suggestive of an overall tendency in the remainder of the fugue for a two-part harmonic treatment of the melodic line rather than the very complex and dense mosaic achieved with all four voice parts in individual counterpoint. As the soprano voice makes a final entry with subject one in the dominant key, the alto voice is silent, the bass line maintains a pedal on the C, and the tenor voice sings subject two:



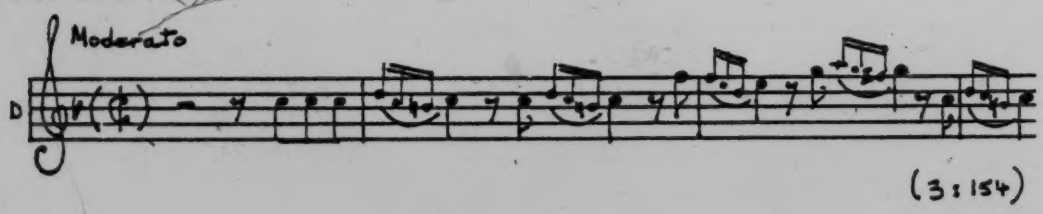
In lightening the texture in this manner Berlioz allowed himself a heightened expressiveness and an emphasis on the melodic line consisting of words from the libretto and musical sounds. The fugue ends with each of the four vocal parts, beginning with the sopranos, asking the question, "Pourquoi survivre/A des instants si doux?" It would appear that Berlioz wished to leave a question in the air in the hope that the audience would pick up on the deliberate exposure of contrapuntal artifice and the grotesque repetition of the word "mourez."

Berlioz supported this goal of discrepancy with his orchestral treatment. The first sound heard in the "Epithalame grotesque" is the low mournful rendering from the string section in octaves of the first two bars of subject one in anticipation of the bass voice entry. To

offset the seriousness of this accompaniment, as explained by Somarone in the interim dialogue, the oboe solo is added for the second rendering (No. 6 bis") and begins just after the altos take up subject two. In his treatise on instrumentation, first published in 1843, Berlioz spoke of the properties of the oboe as follows:

> Un certain degré d'agitation lui est encore accessible, mais il faut se garder de le pousser jusqu'aux cris de la passion, jusqu'à l'élan rapide de la colère, de la menace ou de l'héroisme, car sa petite voix aigre-douce devient alors impuissante et d'un grotesque parfait.''

It is in this vein that Berlioz used the oboe in this epithalamium: both in timbre and in register it offers a sharp contrast to the string accompaniment. As well, through note values it conveys a light-hearted and playful mood with its frequent trills, particularly in the second half, and sixteenth-note turn figures as shown in the opening bars of the oboe solo:



Again, dialogue is established between the overly serious mood of the strings and the ironic teasing of the oboe as it hops and skips over the top of the vocalizing.

Berlioz set out, then, to play with the contradictions of form and practice, thus drawing his listeners into an awareness of the process of music making and in particular

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'' Hector Berlioz, Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration, p. 104.

of the fugal technique. In other words, Berlioz was seeking an objective appreciation from his audience: and this is where they failed him. It is generally acknowledged that his attempts to parody the fugue, both in Béatrice et Bénédict and in La Damnation de Faust, did not succeed, as seen by the reaction of Hugues Imbert: "Mais les choristes ont beau chanter cette fugue en charge, comme le recommandait l'auteur, le public la prend au sérieux et l'applaudit comme une des jolies pages de la partition."[12] Perhaps the key lies in the Romantic assumption that music held magical powers and offered a channel to the supernatural, a concept embodied in the story of Mozart's opera, Die Zauberflöte. In any event the audience of Berlioz's time were not able to rise above their own subjective appreciation of the musical sounds to a level where they could have grasped the ironic aim behind the composer's fugue and the self-reflexive situation he was trying to set up. His intended effect would seem to still be missing its mark if one takes into account the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Béatrice et Bénédict compiled in 1982 which presents only one singing of the "Epithalame grotesque": the oboe solo has been added to the first version, but the interim dialogue is omitted, as well as Somarone's spoken interjections into the second performance to coach his singers. With such gross omissions listeners are not even given a chance to comprehend much of Berlioz's irony particularly with reference to Somarone's

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[12] Imbert, p. 140.

criticism of his musicians and the insight this offers into Berlioz's use of Romantic irony.

Berlioz, however, seems to have relied too heavily upon the music itself for making his point. Because of his intense preoccupation with all facets of the musical world he assumed too much musical perception on the part of his listening audiences. After a performance of La Damnation de Faust which Berlioz had conducted in Dresden in 1854 he reported the following conversation with a young music enthusiast concerning the fugue:

> - Votre fugue sur "amen" est une ironie, n'est-ce pas, c'est une ironie?. . .
> - Hélas! monsieur, j'en ai peur!

Berlioz's aside to this incident, which he included in his written work, Les Grotesques de la musique, was the exclamation, "Il n'en était pas sur !!!"[13] The despair is evident: if even a devotee of music was only guessing at his true meaning, there was little hope that the general public would discover the hidden layer of Romantic irony.

Music on its own is not a reflexive art and its expressive powers must be based upon the immediacy of its effect. Soren Kierkegaard speaks of the superiority of music over the other arts in his work, Enter/Eller; this superiority is based upon music's immediacy, which does not allow reflection to intervene.[14] The incessant repetition of

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[13] H. Berlioz, Les Grotesques de la musique (Paris: Gründ, 1969), p. 50.

[14] Discussed by Ulrich Weisstein in his work of compiled selections, The Essence of Opera (New York, 1964), p. 201.

the word "mourez" in this fugal epithalamium was not discrepant enough: in fact, accoustically it has a soothing-enough sound to lull an audience into perceiving only the church-like strains of the vocal score. Henry Barraud criticizes Berlioz sharply for--in his opinion--a misguided attempt at humor:

> Mais c'est à la musique qu'il a confié la mission de faire rire d'elle-même, et c'est un emploi qui ne lui convient guère. . . . La musique n'a pas le pouvoir d'être drôle par elle-même.'[15]

Barraud's judgement on music's ability to convey humour would seem rather restricted, especially if one takes into account passages from a work such as Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf. Music on its own can convey a straightforward humour of light-heartedness and playfulness, a one-dimensional presentation possible through its choice of tempo and appropriate instrumentation. But to convey the second level of meaning necessary for the depiction of Romantic irony calls for the added forces of setting and particularly text to be brought into play.

In this regard Berlioz was somewhat more successful with the parodying of the fugue in La Damnation de Faust where it is staged as a drinking chorus in Auerbach's cellar, scene six. Here the words and music work more closely to produce the effect of exaggeration. First of all, the text for this fugue consists of only one word, that being "A-men": the result is a melismatic style of singing

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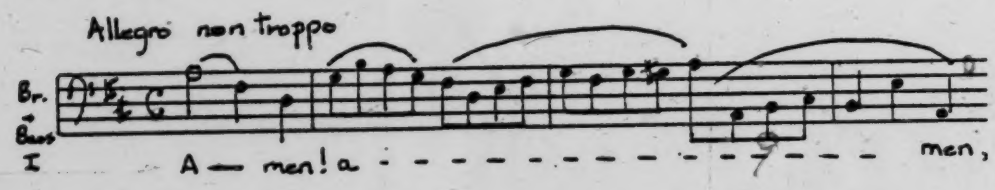
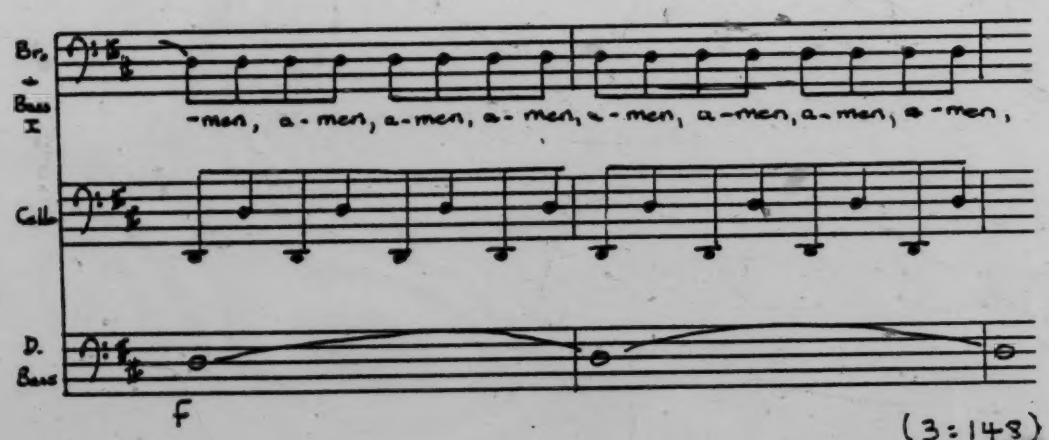
[15] Henry Barraud, Hector Berlioz (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1979), p. 435.

in which the single syllable "a-" is stretched beyond recognition over the successive notes of a melodic line as shown in the opening entry of the fugal subject sung by Brander and the first basses:



The placing of the "a-" of each entry of the fugal subject on a high note of the melodic line which then falls, lends particular stress to each new fugal beginning and over the course of the fugue amounts to a constant battering of exploding "a-'s." The crowning repetition of the word "amen" occurs as the fugue draws to a close: Berlioz scored a pedal point for the orchestra on the note D with Brander and the first basses chanting "a-men, a-men, etc." to eighth notes on a repeating D:



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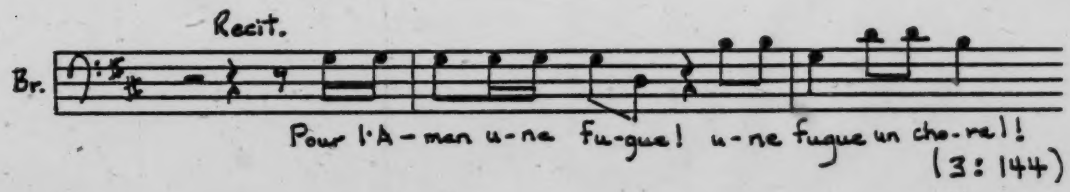
This simplification of the verbal text is of course justified by the portrayed state of the singers: Brander and

the male chorus are sitting around in Auerbach's tavern in Leipzig, drinking and singing, a setting fit to inspire this mediocre type of fugue. These imbibing merry makers, however contribute more to an ironic rendering of a fugue than the sober choristers that Somarone is faced with. Their soberness, though exaggerated, was accepted by listeners as not inconsistent with piety due to the performance of church music. Berlioz was able to couch the earlier fugue parody in a framework that better prepared his audience. The fugue in La Damnation de Faust is announced beforehand by Brander who calls out in recitative:



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In Béatrice et Bénédict it is not till the conclusion of singing the "Epithalame grotesque" that Somarone informs Don Pedro that it is a fugue. Moreover, in the scene from La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz benefitted from the sinister presence of Méphistophélès, who upon Brander's announcement, instructs Faust to watch for "la bestialité dans toute sa candeur." And it is Méphistophélès who after the execution of the fugue makes a very sarcastic comment as to its noble and religious character and answers with a song about a flea who is able to dupe a prince and courtiers because of their stupidity and lack of integrity. In this work as well Berlioz established a mirroring device by having the chorus, suggestive of a musical audience, react to the biting satire

of Méphistophélès. And again we find a reflection of Berlioz himself in his portrayal of Méphistophélès through the mention of the red hair, which has been discussed in chapter four. Berlioz, then, was still very much a Romantic as he allowed himself an ironic self-reflexion in his own works, part of the very essence of Romantic irony.

On its own, the music for the "Epithalame grotesque" would not stand as musical parody. It would be heard as slow, somewhat mournful sounds. To complete the stance of Romantic irony, one need benefit from the staged situation of the frustrated conductor, the insensitive orchestra, and the spoken comments of the bystanders and the conductor himself, with his apparent connection to Berlioz.

Berlioz was attempting to parody music. It is the equivalent of the German Romantic writer, Ludwig Tieck, who through his comedies, such as "Der gestiefelte Kater" of 1797 and "Die verkehrte Welt" of 1798, tried to parody the theatre: ". . . ein Spiel mit dem Spiele . . .sich selbst zu ironisieren."[16] And presumably Berlioz at the time of composing Béatrice et Bénédict had the choice of writing a very conventional, "correct" fugue for Somarone's baton, or the style of fugue in which he personally indulged, that showed greater flexibiltiy of formal qualities and greater freedom of expression. Berlioz chose the latter: in so doing he remained consistent with his inner convictions and his need to make a self-reflexive comment on the musical

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[16] Ludwig Tieck, "Phantasus," Schriften (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1828), p. 280.

conventions of his day.

CHAPTER 13

The Pursuit of Symmetry: A Comparison of Trios

After the successful debut of Béatrice et Bénédict at Baden-Baden in August, 1862, Berlioz returned to Paris in the fall of that year and expanded the score and libretto to include the women's trio and chorus now found in act two. This second trio, number eleven, of the "opéra-comique," is generally considered to be inferior to the male trio of act one, number five, despite the composer's intention to match the two. Hugh Macdonald makes the following statement in this regard: "It was primarily to fill out the second act and give the ladies a trio to balance that of the men that this movement was written, and perhaps for this reason it scarcely equals theirs in invention and subtlety."[1] This attempt of Berlioz to achieve symmetry at the price of artistic inventiveness will now be explored by means of a musico-literary analysis of the two trios in question, number five and number eleven.

Shakespeare's comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, is the very embodiment of the concept of symmetry. First of all, in the matter of characterization there is the older pair of brothers, Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, and his bastard brother, Don John. Moreover, the overall predominating

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[1] Hugh Macdonald, Berlioz, p. 182.

intrigue of the comedy features the two pairs of lovers, Beatrice and Benedick, and Hero and Claudio. Shakespeare stressed this concept of pairing by working it into the structure of his play: the gulling of Benedick, as Don Pedro and Claudio stage a demonstration of Beatrice's affection for him, occurs in scene three of act two, and that of Beatrice at the hands of Hero and Ursula, in scene one of act three. Having been similarily trapped into a declaration of their inner feelings, Beatrice and Benedick then suffer the physical manifestations of being in love in another set of paired scenes from act two, where in scene two Benedick has "the toothache" (line 21), and in scene four Beatrice feels "exceeding ill" (line 53).

The overall structure of the comedy presents a series of festive occasions which results in a dramatic emphasis on ceremony; this parallels the pursuit of illusion on a personal level. The masked ball which opens act two of Shakespeare's comedy finds its natural counterpart in the final wedding scene in which the ladies unmask. The rhythm of dramatic ceremony is maintained through the middle of the comedy as the church marriage ceremony of scene one, act four, becomes corrupted by the false suspicions of Claudio, causing Hero's apparent death and the resulting funeral tribute in act five, scene three, again in a church.

The symmetry in Shakespeare's comedy represents a balancing of various forces. The play is based upon the two pairs of lovers, but their pattern of wooing proceeds along

two distinctly different lines. Claudio follows the winds of fortune; he formerly looked upon Hero "with a soldier's eye" (1. 1. 300) but now with time and inclination he is willing to regard her as an object worth acquiring. It is Benedick, however, who recognizes the materialistic bent of Claudio's mind and the lack of sincerity in his feelings for her, when he makes the comment "Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?" (1. 1. 181). Benedick's evaluation of the state of Claudio's feelings is later born out when Claudio is so easily dissuaded from his amorous intentions by the deceitful intriques of Don John. In the case of Beatrice and Benedick it is the whole theme of language that is used to point up their heightened perception of society. Beatrice can mock the conventionalities of speech used by Leonato in the opening lines of the play because she has first recognized the emptiness and the distance from reality represented by this polished manner of formalized speech. With their verbal war of wit Beatrice and Benedick satirize the excessive yet superficial sentimentality evident in the relations between Hero and Claudio. The deeper awareness of the warring pair, Beatrice and Benedick, both in terms of language and of human affairs, adds depth to the symmetrical pattern presented on the surface by two pairs of lovers.

Berlioz presented as well the two pairs of lovers in his "opéra-comique": the one pair, Héro and Claudio, appear in the static condition of having declared their love and having their fate as a married couple already sealed. This

leaves the focus of the dramatic interest on the more intriguing pair, Béatrice and Bénédict, whose mutual avowal of love will occur over the course of the operatic work. The text of the libretto for trio number five, featuring Bénédict, Claudio and Don Pédro, is based largely upon a conversation held by these three gentlemen near the beginning of the play, Much Ado About Nothing, in which Benedick makes the following defence of bachelorhood:

> Bene. That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that ſhe brought me vp, I likewiſe giue her moſt humble thankes: but that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an inuiſible baldricke, all women ſhall pardon mee: becauſe I will not doe them the wrong to miſtruſt any, I will doe my ſelfe the right to truſt none: and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will liue a bacheller.
>
> (1. 1. 241-247)

A few lines later Benedick carries his challenge to matrimony to the ultimate extreme by suggesting that he should be labelled with a sign if ever he marry:

> Bene. The ſauage bull may, but if euer the ſenſible Benedicke beare it, plucke off the bulls hornes, and ſet them in my forehead, and let me be vildly painted, and in ſuch great letters as they write, here is good horſe to hyre: let them ſignifie vnder my ſigne, here you may ſee Benedicke the married man.
>
> (1. 1. 261-266)

Don Pedro's comment after the first quotation, "I ſhall ſee thee, ere I die, look pale with loue" (1. 1. 248-249), has been displaced by Berlioz to serve as the rejoinder of Claudio and Don Pédro to Bénédict's musical pronouncement regarding the sign as they sing "Qu'on le verra pâle d'amour!"

The subject matter for Berlioz's male trio clearly centers around Bénédict's disdain for the institution of marriage with its inevitable snare of cuckoldry; this was featured in Shakespeare's comedy by the frequent reference to horns. To this Berlioz has added the notion of life in a cloister being preferable to the married state, all of which surfaces in the opening stanza of the trio, sung by Bénédict:

> Me marier? Dieu me pardonne!
> Ah! j'aime mieux dans un couvent
> Moisir sous le froc tristement,
> Et que l'univers m'abandonne.
>
> (3 : 119-121)

This message will be reiterated by Béatrice in the women's trio as she likens matrimony to the bonds of slavery:

> Un amant? un époux? à moi? de l'esclavage
> Traîner la chaîne en frémissant?
> Ah! j'aime mieux dans un couvent
> Voir se flétrir la fleur de mon bel âge,
> Sous le cilice et le noir vêtement.
>
> (3 : 236-237)

The image of the convent does not surface in the comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, but it is well known how struck Berlioz was in 1827 as a young man when he first witnessed a performance of Shakespeare's Hamlet by a visiting English troupe. And to be sure it was the role of Ophelia--dispelled by Hamlet to a nunnery and impersonated in this case by Harriet Smithson, Berlioz' future wife--that struck him most forcibly. In his Mémoires Berlioz spoke of a "fracas sublime" as he depicted his state of being thunderstruck.[3] In addition to the possibility of a Shakespearian source for

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[3] Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 65.

the idea of the convent, French literature in general contains much about convents and prisons since Diderot. There is also a hint of Romantic isolationism in the line of Bénédict, "Et que l'universe m'abandonne."

With this message in mind, i.e., a statement of Bénédict's reluctance to marry, Berlioz sought out a musical equivalent in the form of a trio. Such an ensemble piece forms the backbone of a comic work in that it offers a simultaneous presentation of interrelationships among characters. In his book, Opera as Drama, Joseph Kerman speaks of the role of ensembles in comedy: "We can also see the value, indeed the necessity, of operatic ensembles for the dramatic mode of comedy. . . Comedy needs speed, and the ensemble provides it . . . ."[3] Kerman's examples are from Mozart but he makes it clear that the alternative to ensemble work would be individual arias and possible recitatives, a very lengthy process indeed. This bridge had already been gapped in the eighteenth century; and in accordance, Berlioz availed himself of a trio ensemble to depict the most important moment in the first act, i.e., the challenge of such a "matrimoniophobia" that forms an obstacle to the development of the whole love intrigue.

The overall structure of the trio first presents Bénédict, singing a lively tune marked Allegretto in 3/8 time, which evolves into a refrain for the whole trio. After his blithe opener that begins with the challenge, "Me

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[3] Joseph Kerman, Opera as Drama (London: Oxford U. Press, 1957), p. 85.

marier?" (as quoted above), Claudio and Don Pédro step in with their teasing version of the stanza:

> Quelle fureur! Dieu vous pardonne
> De maudire un lien charmant,
> Et de préférer le couvent,
> Au bonheur que l'hymen nous donne!

Bénédict now takes the stage with an operatic rendition of Benedick's defence of bachelorhood quoted above:

> D'une femme il est vrai que je reçus la vie!
> Elle m'éleva, je l'en remercie;
> Mais si malgré tout je ne me soucie
> Que fort peu de porter de hauts bois sur le front,
> Les femmes me pardonneront.
> Par ma défiance,
> De toutes les blesser je n'ai pas le vouloir;
> Je ne saurais pourtant avoir
> En l'une d'elles confiance,
> Et ma conclusion,
> C'est que je veux mourir garçon.

In Hugh Macdonald's terminology, which adds clarity, this part of the trio should be considered an episode. The first episode portrays a slightly more sincere tone than the opening refrain as seen in the more smoothly flowing melodic line without any jerky, rhythmic patterns. This episode is followed by a return to the opening refrain as all three male voices take part.

The second episode of the trio brings a switch in the 3/8 metre to two beats in a bar (2/4) which offered Berlioz a setting for open confrontation between Bénédict on the one side and the pair of Claudio and Don Pédro on the other. What results is a delightful exchange of retorts, in some cases a phrase, in others a single word. The tempo gradually increases to a Presto as does the intensity of the verbal combat: relief is immediately offered by the singing of the

refrain. The next episode or means of variation takes the unexpected form of a short passage of recitative as Bénédict in mock heroic tones vows to submit to wearing a sign with the words, "l'homme marié," if ever he commits the ultimate folly of marrying. To conclude the trio, Berlioz presented the three voices in a coda-style Allegro which proceeds in common 4/4 time with a lively, agitated beat to express Bénédict's continuing opposition to the matrimony suggested by the other two. Thus, trio number five presents a variety within its rondo form;[4] there is good contrast in terms of tempo and time signature, with enough repetition of the opening refrain to provide moments of listening relief for the audience.

In examining the overall structure of trio number eleven, one must first take note of the actual subject matter being expressed. In fact, the message lacks some conviction in that Berlioz omitted the real purport of the Hero-Claudio relationship and therefore was limited to evoking a contrived state of static bliss which can only lapse into excessive sentimentality. The proportionate parts in Shakespeare's symmetry, provided by the contrast in the two couples, is missing in the "opéra-comique." There would appear to be only one ideal to strive for, and that is what Héro and Ursula sing about as the trio opens:

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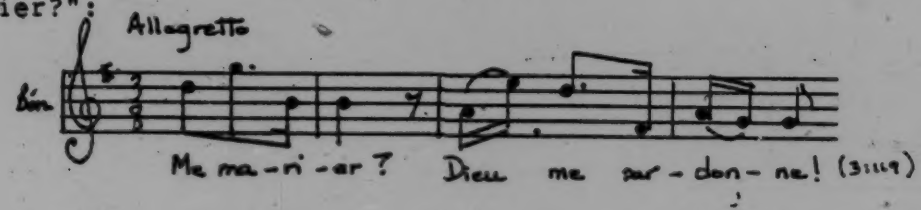
[4] The rondo is especially suitable for light-hearted content, as its history is bound up with light, dance-like music. The coda (pp. 135-143) is especially interesting: in canon, the voices are used more like instruments to add colour and vitality with the words themselves not so important.

Je vais/Héro, d'un coeur aimant
Être la joie et le bonheur suprême:
Mon/son cher Claudio m'aime,/l'aime,
Et mon/son époux restera mon/son amant.
(3 : 231-232)

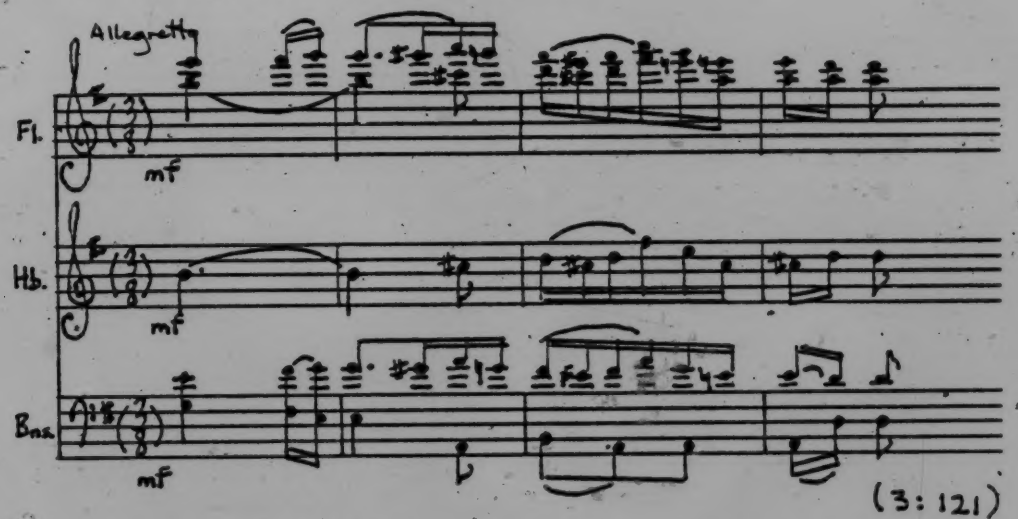
The prevalence of such words--coeur aimant, la joie, le bonheur suprême , m'aime, mon amant--testify to the shallowness of the textual content. This opening number proceeds at a relatively slow tempo, a Larghetto, in 6/8 time, and reminds one rather too closely of the Duo-Nocturne, which closes Act One of the "opéra-comique": the duo is also in 6/8 time with a slow moving tempo and is sung by Héro and Ursula.

What follows was an attempt by Berlioz to produce through libretto and music a gulling of Béatrice. He never abandoned the basic framework of a 6/8 time signature but manipulated the tempo as he gradually increased it to a dramatic Allegro agitato which breaks with the laughter of Héro and Ursula. A brief Rallentando poco a poco leads back to Tempo I and a repeat of the Larghetto. There is much less formal variety in this women's trio.

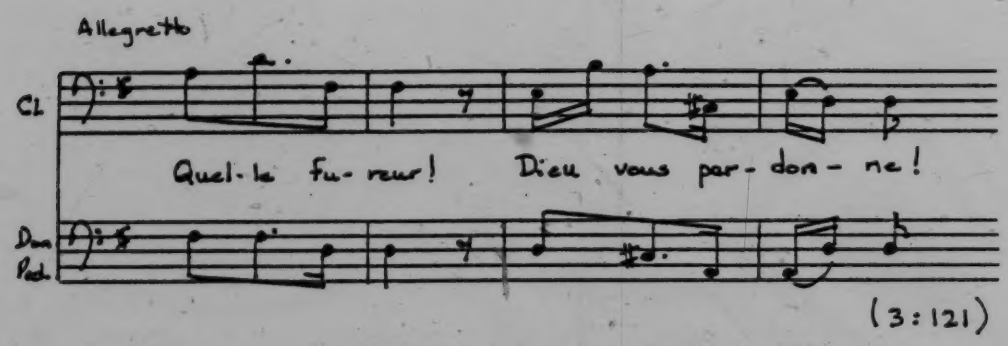
To now compare the trios more closely will perhaps show how successfully Berlioz realized an interaction of words and music. Trio number five opens in G major in a very arresting manner with Bénédict's rhetorical question, "Me marier?":



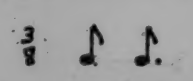
At the conclusion of his opening quatrain, Bénédict sings the line, "Et que l'univers m'abandonne," ending appropriately in the key of E minor and with a heavy accompaniment brought out by the low string section of cellos and double-basses. This is immediately answered by the wind section in the upper registers with a close copying of the opening orchestral phrase, (bars one to four of the trio), like an orchestral ritornello:



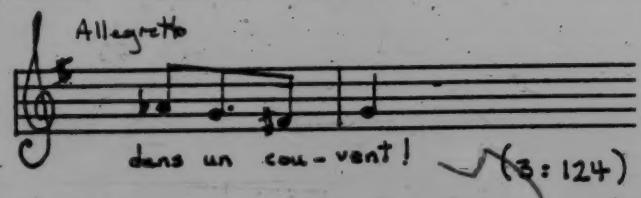
Such orchestral dialogue serves as an example of Berlioz's skill in employing his orchestra for dramatic function: in this case, the repeat of the opening phrase offers contrast in timbre and key to the low strings and provides a bridge to the entry of Claudio and Don Pédro. They enter with their teasing rejoinder to Bénédict's unyielding stance, sung to the same melody as Bénédict's but on the Dominant:



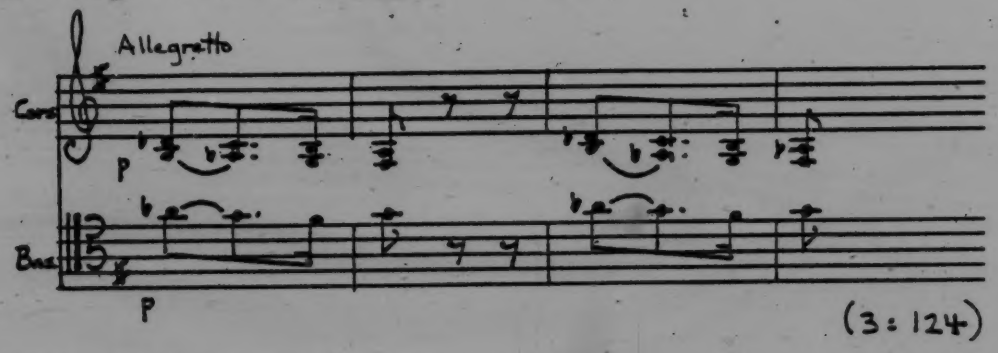
The establishing of this jaunty rhythmic figure,



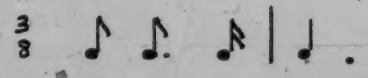
is crucial to the mood of the whole refrain and will also appear in the first episode, thereby acting as a rhythmical leitmotif for the theme of bachelorhood and resistance to marriage. Before the beginning of episode one, Bénédict sings the words, "dans un couvent" to this same rhythm:



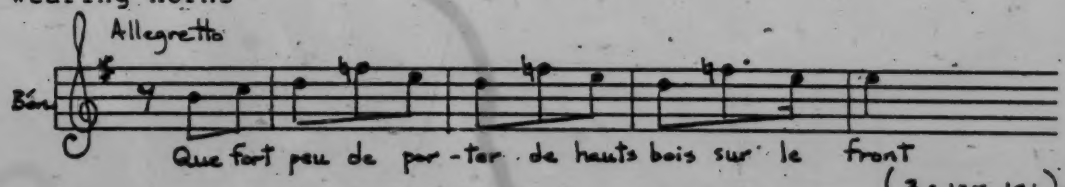
This musical phrase is then echoed twice by the horns and the bassoons, this whole conclusion to the refrain being in the minor key of G in order to add a mock serious tone to the image of the convent:



Despite the somewhat more serious tone of the first episode in keeping with Bénédict's attempt to present logical arguments for his objections to marrying, the melodic line is lightened in several places by this same rhythmic figure,

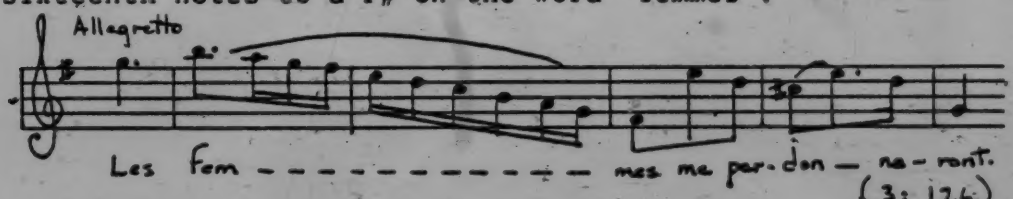


It is used effectively to accompany Bénédict's phobia over wearing horns--



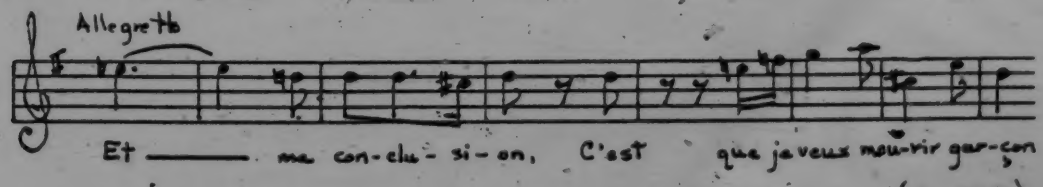
(3: 125-126)

and leads to a mid-point climax of this first episode as Bénédict sings a high B and then descends in a run of sixteenth notes to a F# on the word "femmes":



(3: 126)

This message is matched by the ending of the episode where the figure reappears and leads to a final pronouncement on the word, "garçon":



(3: 127)

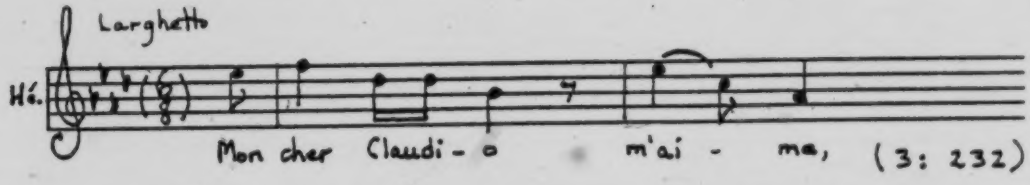
The first section of the trio ends with all three male voices participating in the refrain. The necessary

discrepancy for comedy has clearly been established by the parts where Bénédict sings alone in defence of bachelorhood in opposition to the teasing stance of Claudio and Don Pédro who reply in duo.

In the opening section of the women's trio, number eleven, any opposing stance among the characters is not so easy to determine since all three sing the same words of the opening quatrain except for one-word changes from grammatical necessity:

Héro: Je vais d'un coeur. . .
Ursula: Héro, d'un coeur. . .
Béatrice: Tu vas d'un coeur. . .

The flowing 6/8 metre of the Larghetto provides a very appropriate vehicle for singing of amorous bliss as seen in the following example:[1]



(3: 232)

The overall effect is very melodious but restrained, thus hindering the realization of any striking moments either in the libretto or in the music. Héro and Ursula do take a position aside in order to sing the comments, "Quelle douceur" and "Quel changement," but in such soothing tones as to remain within the character of the piece:

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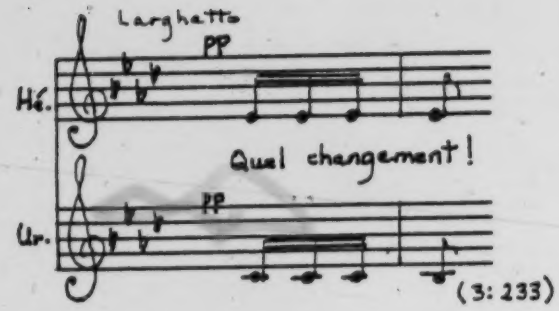
[1] This number eleven bears some resemblance to the Quartet (No.3) from Beethoven's Fidelio, which is also slow, in 6/8 time, and has a pizzicato bass with the flowing line above.

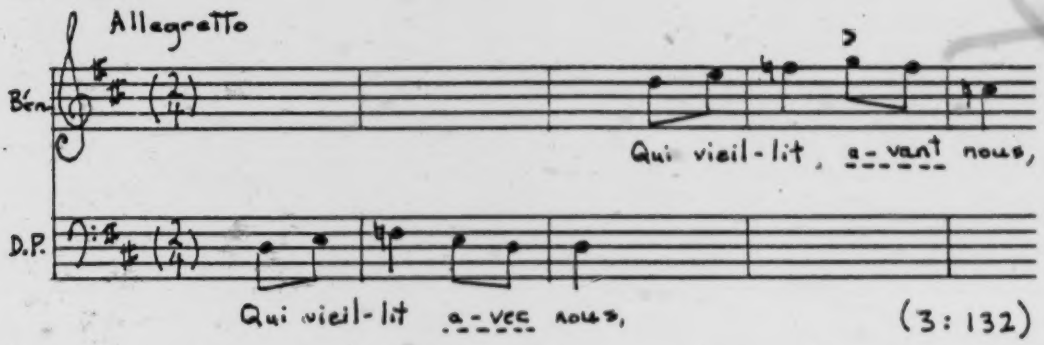


Musically, there is no hint of opposition at this point.

The two trios now move into a section of development where the composer explored any variation possible either in subject matter or in musical form. For trio number five Berlioz did not introduce any additional material into the content of the libretto text but sought a variation on the basic theme through the exchange of retorts which forms the second episode. The refrain follows. The other Shakespearian idea of Benedick wearing a sign to label him a married man is expanded in the recitative passage. The emphasis of the development is thus on musical form.

To set the scene for the exchange of retorts, the Allegretto in 2/4 time opens with a pizzicato string accompaniment supported by unsustained eighth-note chords from the oboes and clarinets. After the first insults "Impie! Ingrat! Blasphémateur!"--the three males continue with a series of phrases whereby Claudio and Don Pédro praise the state of matrimony and also a bride: Bénédict of course calls down their every suggestion. The words and music complement each other most effectively at this point as seen in the following example where a change of one word

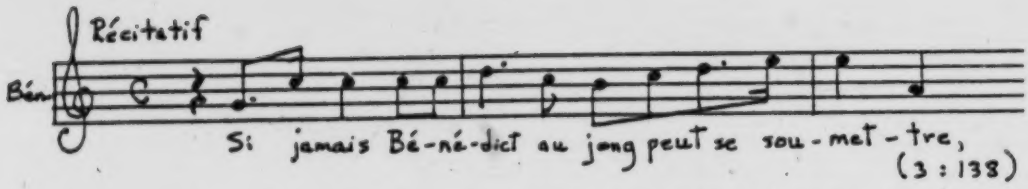
in the text leads to a slight variation in the musical line as well:



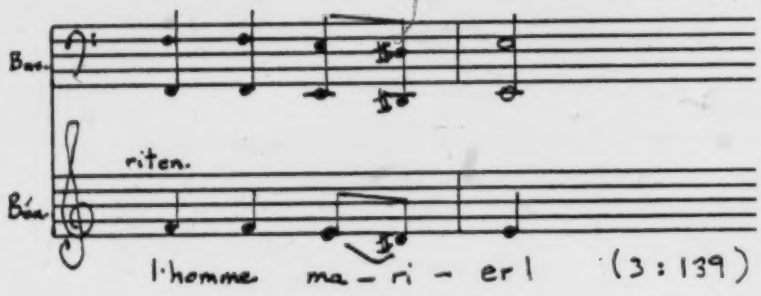
(3:132)

Berlioz now shifted back to 3/8 time to allow for more movement as the phrases dissolve into single words hurled back and forth: "Fidélité-Fragilité," "Tendresse-Faiblesse," etc. And the episode concludes with a Presto and the final pair of retorts, "Doux-Houx!" The resulting tension in the mood of the text and the musical Presto is relaxed by a return to Tempo I and a three-part singing of the refrain. The Allegretto begins in B minor, shifting to C minor for the Allegro più breve (3/8), before returning to the tonic at Tempo I.

The final portion of the second episode is a recitative passage chosen by Berlioz in order to stage a mock drama of Bénédict's pronouncement that he will wear a sign if ever he marry. The selection opens after a dramatic pause with the tremolo string accompaniment over which Bénédict sings a melodic line that closely follows the rhythm of the words:



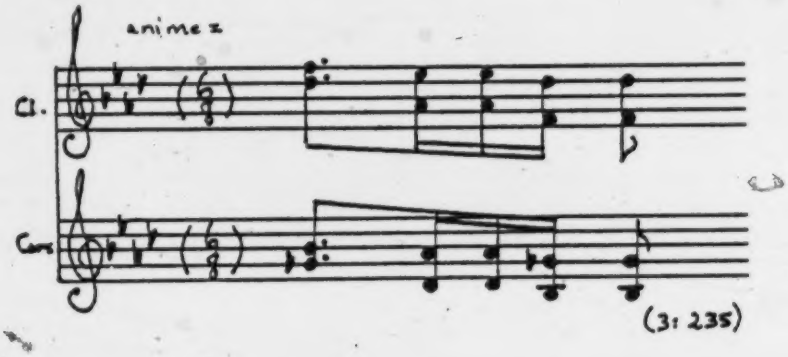
At the end of each line the wind section breaks in with a highly dramatic arpeggio run. The seriousness is broken, however, by the fact that Bénédict refers to himself in the third person, foregoing the direct quality of "je." The actual wording of the sign, "Ici l'on voit Bénédict, l'homme marié!" is punctuated by chords from the clarinets and bassoons, with the bassoons participating in unison with Bénédict in the ritenuto on the final words:



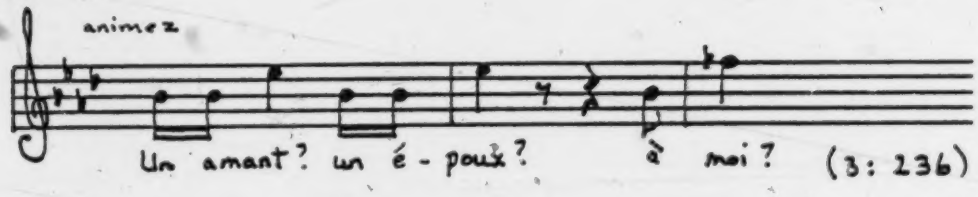
The bassoon is the bass of the oboe; and as has been cited earlier in the thesis, Berlioz employed the oboe for comic effect of which there is a definite carry over here in the way the bassoons accompany Bénédict. After the clarinets, the bassoons repeat this bar, before Claudio and Don Pédro reply with a very heavy and solemn passage supported by the cellos, double-bass and bassoons. There is obvious comic discrepancy in this passage since the words they are singing describe laughter rather than any hint of grief: "Comme nous

rirons tous, le jour Qu'on le verra pâle d'amour!" The subtlety of the tempo marking is exquisite.

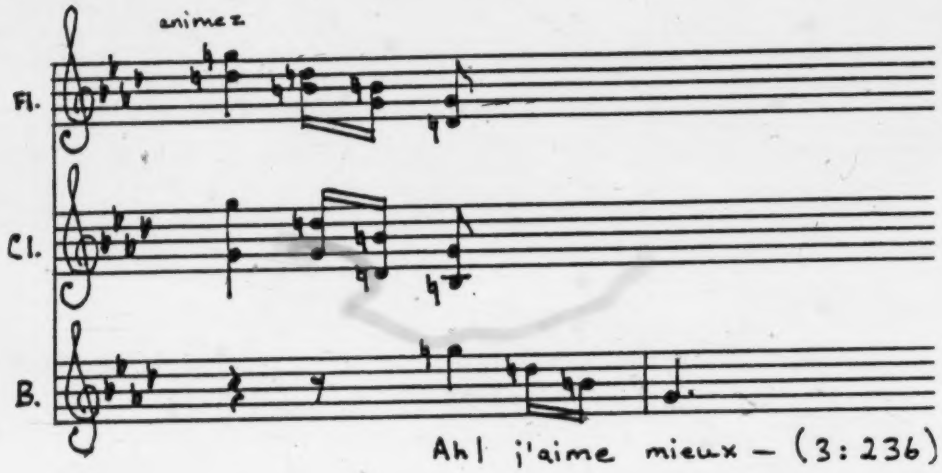
The development section of the women's trio introduces a surprising amount of ongoing conversation as Héro and Ursula ask questions of Béatrice, make a supposition of a possible proposal and finally paint for her an imagined state of jealousy, all in an attempt to gull her into betraying her feelings for Bénédict. Ursula begins by asking Béatrice if she is jealous of the blissful pair, Héro and Claudio, and if she would be willing to relinguish her treasured liberty for the state of matrimony. The only musical moment of interest is a military-like sound from the horns and clarinets as if to issue a battle cry at the mention of "liberté":



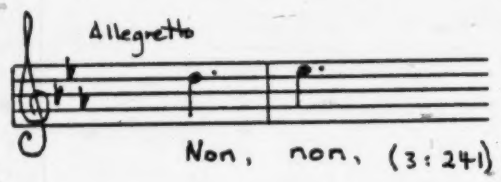
Béatrice is roused to defend her spinsterhood; her startled entry capitalizes on upward leaps to emphasize her defensive stance:



Her pretense of preferring a convent is dramatically announced by descending arpeggio runs from most of the orchestra, to be copied by Béatrice's own melodic line:



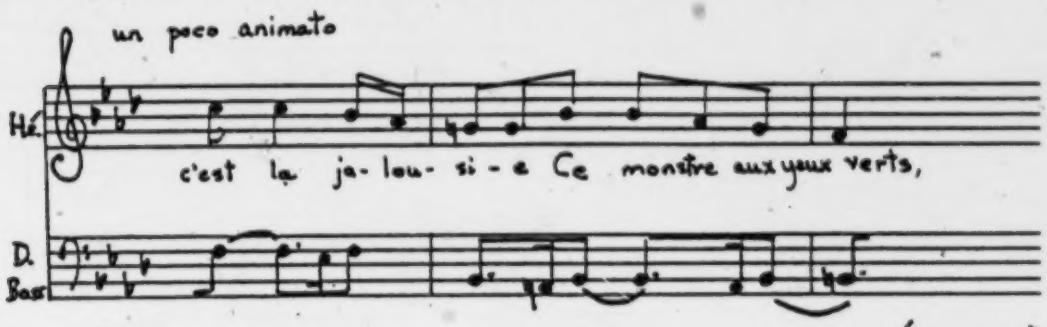
Héro now proceeds with the supposition that if some fine gentleman would fall for Béatrice's charms--what then would she do? Béatrice's reply brings one striking moment for libretto and music as she sings "Non, Non," where the length and the ascending pitch of the notes add to their emphasis:



Basically, what is happening in this development section is that the dialogue is being passed back and forth among the characters, the emphasis resting upon the words rather than upon the music. There is little of true ensemble work presented here since the characters are singing solos.

The music, although still in 6/8 metre, continues to gain momentum through such indications as "animato" and

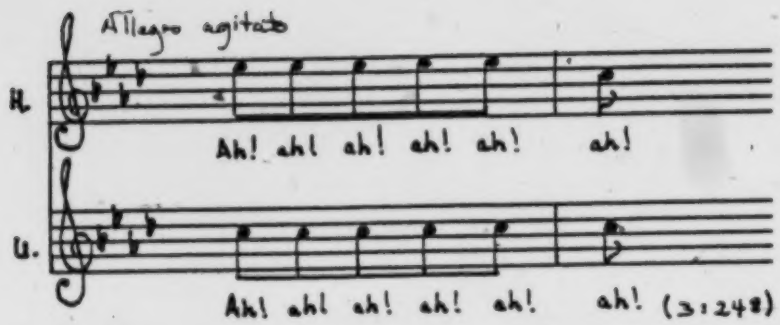
"poco più mosso" as Héro and Ursula more aggressively try to dupe Béatrice. When Héro tries to colourfully depict the green-eyed monster, jealousy, the strings maintain a tremolo accompaniment over an agitated double-bass figure:



(3: 243)

This is no doubt the most effective part of the trio as the music very actively supports the meaning of the words. The ensuing duo passage with Héro and Béatrice gains in excitement and tension and is vividly accompanied by the strings as Héro seems to get caught up herself in the fear of a relationship going awry with jealousy.

To this point both trios have availed themselves of the dramatic power possible through increasing the tempo of music in building toward a climax. In trio number five, however, it is used briefly and effectively in episode two, whereas in the women's trio it accounts for the whole development section. In trio number five the tension is broken by returning to the jaunty refrain. In the women's trio Héro and Ursula break out in laughter as a conclusion to having drawn Béatrice into such an imagined state of jealousy and rage:



(3:248)

It is questionable whether this outburst of laughter would be appreciated by an audience which has just witnessed Héro singing so passionately with Béatrice. It is rather a sudden reversal, indicated only by the text and not by the music. Héro then concludes this development section with a short rallentando poco a poco passage meant to serve as a transition back to a return of the Larghetto, Tempo I. The melodic line descends in keeping with the object of bringing down the mood of the climax; but Héro sings the words, "Mais j'ai voulu rire. Non, je le sens," which again represents a change of position that can find no musical equivalent in the ongoing musical phrase presented.

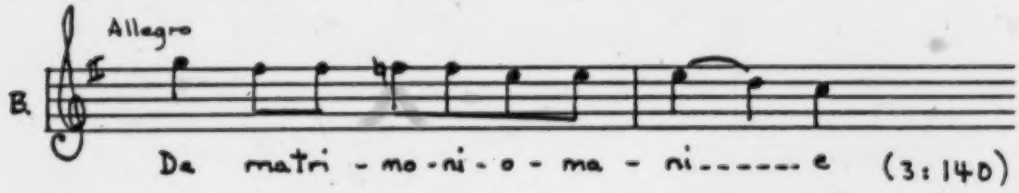
The overall musical result of this development section of trio number eleven can be likened to a motor vehicle: it moves ahead with a gradual increase of speed and with various drivers at the wheel, but always proceeding in one direction. In other words, Berlioz's later trio for this "opéra-comique" suffers from too much linear development at the expense of evoking a simultaneous and reflexive configuration--as in cubist form--which is the genius of ensemble work.

Trio number five ends with a coda-style Allegro which presents the three male voices in trio form reflecting upon the strange situation as they sing:

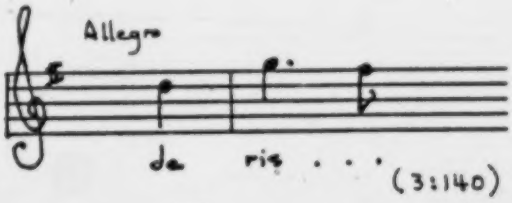
CLAUDIO, DON PÉDRO
Ah! l'étrange folie!
Non, jamais de ma vie,
De matrimoniophobie
Je ne vis un exemple égal.
Rions de sa prudence,
Et de sa persistance
À craindre l'accident fatal!

(3 : 139-141)

Instead of "matrimoniophobie" Bénédict sings of "matrimoniomanie" and also replaces their last line with "À prôner le destin banal." This play on the word matrimony is rendered in a melodic phrase of disjointed eighth notes,



in keeping with the agitated, choppy style of the whole Allegro. Bénédict's line beginning, "Je ris. . ." features the jump of a fourth which lends particular stress to the syllable "ris":



The other phrase that is repeated incessantly to form an ending to the whole trio is Bénédict's singing of "le destin banal," which occurs ten times in obvious compliance with the operatic need for repetition. Trio number eleven

concludes with a repetition of the opening Larghetto, the effect being very soothing but somewhat anticlimactic. All three female voices are singing the words of the opening quatrain, extolling the state of marital bliss, which does not offer any reflexion on the gulling of Béatrice that has been attempted over the course of the development section. These two trios would seem to serve as a good example of how opera is most effective: to offer reflexion on a state of affairs works well, which is what Berlioz achieved in trio number five. Bénédict starts out opposed to marriage at the beginning and remains so to the end; but in the middle Berlioz found effective textual and musical means to exploit the situation. In trio number eleven the attempt is made to bring about an evolving of inner feelings, which prescribes too much dramatic development to be encased in operatic singing.

It would also appear that Berlioz was much more at home in the composing of trio number five, inspired almost exclusively by the Shakespearian text. In trio number eleven, he was forced to proceed from a contrived state of affairs, resulting from his excision of the original text. Shakespeare's symmetry was based upon a proportionate ordering of disparate parts, whereas Berlioz's conception of symmetry with regards to the women's trio was based upon imitation not in keeping with his usual originality. The result was a less than successful integration of text and musical sounds.

CHAPTER 14

CONCLUSION

Hector Berlioz emerges as an outstanding example of "Doppelbegabung." Integrating his talents as a writer with those as a musical composer, he progressed towards the fused art form of opera and brought works to fruition that place him at the forefront of French operatic music. He arrived at an integral fusion of words and sounds by first exploring the possiblities of programme music. His Symphonie fantastique and its sequel, Lélio, of the early 1830's were classic examples of the Romantic yearning to see the different arts draw closer together and mutually enhance each other. The accompanying literary programme with its highly autobiographical content was intended by Berlioz as a key to understanding the musical sounds. At the same time his style of composition upheld the Romantic conviction that music itself was the most evocative of artistic media for the expression of human emotion. Eventually Berlioz downplayed the distribution of the programme since the music of the Symphonie fantastique became well-known on its own. The work, Lélio, continued the autobiographical connection but extended it from the personal happiness of the artist to his career expectations. Musically, Lélio offered a pot-pourri of earlier compositions and only gained the

spotlight momentarily because of its continuation of the Symphonie fantastique's programme.

This early need, fulfilled by programme music, for the highly subjective expression of personal feelings developed over the course of Berlioz's career into a mature drive towards more objective artistic goals. As with most nineteenth-century French composers, his basic creative aspiration was in the direction of opera or of theatrically oriented works. In La Damnation de Faust, the first work to be dealt with in depth in this thesis, Berlioz moved away from the personal realm and took up the fashionable topic among early Romantic artists of Goethe's Faust. An earlier collection of songs and choral numbers from 1829 had dwelt upon certain images to do with Marguerite and with Méphistophélès. Using this collection as a basis, Berlioz tried from 1845 to 1846 to round out the original material; with intervening orchestral passages and most specifically, with characterizing arias for Faust, he set out to produce a complete dramatic work. Berlioz struggled with the appropriate form for his musical drama. Goethe had presented his drama, Faust I, in a rather free, unconventional structure to correspond to the intangible realm of ideas he wished to depict. The form for Berlioz's final Faust work was also very individual for which he chose the novel designation "légende dramatique." The term "légende dramatique" suggests an emphasis on narrative which is important for understanding Berlioz's commitment to make

music contribute closely to the development of plot. The actual result in La Damnation de Faust--as with Goethe's Faust--was a structure with such frequent and drastic scene changes that it was not readily adaptable for dramatic staging.

Romantic music shared with literary Romanticism the need to free traditional forms and to create new forms in order to find a more expressive medium for art. This freeing of form is one of the marks of Berlioz's genius as a librettist and particularly as a composer and led him to try to find an exact musical equivalent for his literary inspirations. His work of 1839, Roméo et Juliette, also belongs in genre to this penchant for original forms. It is called a dramatic symphony or in the words of Berlioz, "une symphonie avec choeurs, solos de chant et récitatif choral.' If one looks at a list of Berlioz's compositions it is noticeable that most works bear an individual genre designation. There is only one "grand opéra," only one "opéra-comique,"--in other words, no frequent use of any one compositional genre. Such an individual approach to classification attests to Berlioz's search for the particular form suited to the subject matter at hand and to his actual creation of a totally unique genre such as the dramatic symphony.

At this early stage of libretto writing, however, Berlioz did not succeed with La Damnation de Faust in

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' Hector Berlioz, Mémoires, p. 219.

creating a work of dramatic linear continuity. The unconnected nature of the original eight songs left its imprint on the larger work as well: La Damnation de Faust is characterized by its tableaux nature rather than by ongoing narrative development. There are four parts, each one featuring an additional character. Faust is introduced in Part One on the plains of Hungary; in Part Two Méphistophélès appears. Part Three brings Marguerite into the picture and portrays the development of her feelings for Faust. The predominating role in the final part is played by the overpowering forces of the demonic as personified by Méphistophélès, who subdues Faust; then, the angelic hosts take over and save Marguerite.

Having the framework of his libretto in mind, Berlioz faced the task of completing the musical score. It was at this stage that the true genius of Berlioz came to the fore. With the dramatic legend, La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz produced in the Romantic tradition music of extraordinary quality. Chapter three has shown, through analysis of a Faust aria, the exceptional union between words and musical sounds achieved by Berlioz. Through the Romantic form of a "durchkomponiert" song, the form of the music and the content of the libretto text work as one in expressing the limitless longing of the Berliozian Faust. Berlioz was also very successful in characterizing through music the demonic personality of Mephistopheles. He introduced the spirit of irony connected with Mephistopheles by using musical forms

such as the fugue and the minuet. The portrayal of this uncanny figure was further enhanced by the bold and innovative orchestral powers of Berlioz. His jarring use of the trombone to announce Méphistophélès' entries and the unexpected orchestration and unusual use of instruments such as the ophicleide in the "Course à l'abîme" were entirely suited to finding a musical equivalent for images of the fantastique. Parisian audiences, however, — found the unconventional sounds overwhelming because of their novelty and sheer volume. Berlioz became a topic of derision, and his music declared unfit for refined ears! The Germans were no more adventuresome if one takes into account the opinion expressed by Zelter, musical advisor to Goethe. We have seen in chapter three how Zelter represented Berlioz's music to Goethe as a series of sounds limited to explosive outbursts.

It was the daring unconventionality of Berlioz that eventually became synonymous with his musical brilliance. Ten years after the completion of La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz began work on what was to become the one "grand opéra" of his composing career. For the topic of his "grand opéra," Les Troyens, Berlioz delved into the realm of mythology, a very personal choice at a time when nationalistically oriented subjects were in favour. In order to transfer the form of Virgil's Aeneid to that required in a "grand opéra," Berlioz was forced to forego the linear development of epic narration. Opera must focus on story elements that are limited to specific settings and

characters in order to allow the necessary musical development to take place. The form for Les Troyens is based upon a five-act structure with one part taking place in Troy (Acts One and Two) and the other in Carthage. Act Three characterizes Didon and her kingdom of Carthage and Act Four, the love relations that develop between Didon and Énée. As by convention, the final act of the opera must end tragically, Berlioz terminated his operatic plot at the point of Énée's departure for Italy and Didon's suicide.

With regards to musical forms Les Troyens offers operatic scenes of solos, ensembles as well as spectacle in the classic tradition of nineteenth-century French "grand opéra." But Berlioz had more in mind. His goal was to put into practice the Gluckian principles of making music more responsive to the dramatic storyline. The first step was to reduce the amount of recitative which was too obvious a means of furthering plot and resulted in a break of the musical continuity. Berlioz strove to move smoothly from aria to a minimal amount of recitative and back to aria or ensemble numbers. As seen in chapter nine, such transition is accomplished through similarity of key and of accompanying musical style.

Berlioz also restricted the amount of solo or ensemble singing that served only as musical diversion in the style of Rossini and did not contribute to dramatic development. In Act One of Les Troyens Cassandre and Chorèbe sing a duet as Duo Number Three. Audiences might have expected a typical

love duet with the reciprocal avowal of tender emotions. Berlioz left such expression to Chorèbe; but against that he juxtaposed the frantic outbursts of Cassandre at variance in rhythm and in melodic style. In this way Berlioz gave expression to their love but simultaneously conveyed the ominous forebodings of a seer. Through the role of Cassandre, Berlioz realized in opera the technique of dramatic irony.

In composing the libretto and score for Les Troyens, Berlioz claimed to be working according to a "système shakespearien." By using literary techniques from Shakespeare, such as dramatic irony, Berlioz was able to increase the dramatic continuity throughout the composition of words and sounds. Another feature of this system was the Shakespearian notion of a play-within-a-play. Berlioz used this technique to advantage in Les Troyens in that it combined very appropriately with the demand for pantomime in French "grand opéra." Chapter seven explores this concept through the two examples contained in Les Troyens, the more significant one being the operatic staging of the Royal Hunt and Storm. Again with Berlioz one finds a unique combination of the literary with the musical since such scenes of pantomime allowed full exposure of his tremendous powers of orchestration. Berlioz was never at a loss when the orchestra alone was required to carry the full dramatic development in sound. Such intrumental passages create a distance to the visual events of the pantomime; and the

audience is led to view the story presented in miniature--i.e., the play-within-a-play--from a more objective perspective.

The main advantage, then, of this "système shakespearien" was the dramatic continuity and complexity that it gave to Berlioz's style of composition. His use of the supernatural also acted as a unifying force and showed his familiarity with a Shakespearian drama such as Hamlet as well as a Romantic understanding of the supernatural. In typical fashion, the ghosts call up the past and also point to the future. One way they, and others such as Cassandre, accomplish this foreshadowing is by their ominous singing of the name "Italie." This proclamation of the new homeland gains in dramatic effect as it occurs at the most theatrical moments throughout the opera: as Cassandre and her companions commit suicide before the Greeks advance into Troy and as Mercury cuts through the atmosphere of bliss from the love duet, sung by Didon and Énée at the end of Act Four. The mocking of the call by the sentinels at the beginning of the final act is also very effective.

The sentinels' duet and Hylas' song embody the Shakespearian principle of contrast, whether of genre or of mood and tone. The cyclical nature of the sailor's song offers relief from the dramatic tension constantly being built up over the course of this long opera. But, in fact, the music for this song contributes to the storyline by a different means. In representing the repetitive, yet

unrelenting motion of the sea, the music becomes symbolic of the whole force of destiny to which individuals must yield--a dominant theme from the Aeneid as well. The music for the sentinels brings a needed touch of comedy. But here too the musical accompaniment proves a stronger force than their non-melodic grumblings. They are pulled away from their comforts in Carthage just as Énée will be redirected; it is a stroke of comic relativism. Through this "systeme shakespearien" Berlioz achieved a continuity of musical and dramatic development and increased, moreover, the depth of meaning of what is being presented on stage. Dramatic irony accompanies the events portrayed with a hint of the tragic outcome. A play-within-a-play inspires advance reflection on an overall view of the plot as suggested in miniature. The supernatural figures convey superior knowledge of the past and of what is to come. Finally, the diversive scenes with minor characters are secondary to the main plot, but at the same time reflect the fate of the heroes themselves.

These techniques increased the perspective by allowing the simultaneous presentation of an additional layer of meaning. The result in Les Troyens is increased powers of expression for the medium of operatic music. To tie music more closely to the storyline being presented was one of Gluck's principles of reform, although his own works do not always illustrate this. It was Berlioz--along with others like Mozart--who succeeded in enhancing the narrative powers of music. The obsessive, even mystical, love of Didon is

admirably rendered by Berlioz as well as the less than honorable wavering of Énée that leaves him a questionable hero whether in the opera or in the epic.

The work, when completed in 1858, was considered too long by Parisian opera directors, and Berlioz experienced difficulty in having even the second part staged as Les Troyens à Carthage. In fact, the operatic works of Berlioz are still in the process of being discovered. It was only toward the centennial of Berlioz's death that Les Troyens was produced in full at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as well as later at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

The final operatic work of Berlioz's career as composer and librettist appeared in 1862. With the opéra-comique," Béatrice et Bénédict, Berlioz also set himself very deliberate goals with regards to the interaction of text and musical sounds. His choice of literary source again bore witness to the French Romantic fascination with Shakespeare. The comparison of subject matter between a literary text and an operatic libretto is an easy one to make. The comic intrigue created by Shakespeare suggests a war of words with little intervening action. Berlioz reduced the action further by concentrating on Béatrice and Bénédict.

Less obvious is how Berlioz was influenced by matters of Shakespearian form. Chapter eleven shows through analysis the transfer of form needed in order to reproduce the verbal wit of Shakespeare in duets and trios of a comic vein. The

light-hearted courting combat of the Béatrice-Bénédict ensembles was straightforward and easily appreciated by contemporary audiences. What they did not understand was the overt suggestion of Romantic irony that Berlioz tried to insert through the scenes of rehearsal with the bumbling conductor Somarone. The odd choice of wedding hymn ("Epithalame grotesque") was indicated by dialogue on stage. But the mournful style of singing was accepted at face value and found somewhat uninteresting--to be dismissed totally by future directors. No connection was made between Somarone and Berlioz, and between the choir and the lack of musical appreciation that Berlioz had struggled with for all of his musical career. The intended mirroring of Romantic irony with its topical allusion to the musical scene of Berlioz's day was lost. Again, Berlioz had tried to make his music more expressive of storyline by conveying an underlying layer of meaning. The result was a style of operatic music that was difficult for contemporary audiences to apprehend. They were accustomed to being entertained by musical sounds that were fairly easy to assimilate and become familiar with. Thus, the light-hearted parts of this "opéra-comique" won acclaim where much of Berlioz's earlier composition had been disregarded. It enjoyed immediate success among German audiences and eventually in Paris as well.

Taking the three major works together, one notices how the literary influence increases chronologically in the libretti and scores of Berlioz. For La Damnation de Faust,

Berlioz abstracted from Goethe's drama what lent itself readily to the creation of musical moments or tableaux, featured in essence in the original Huit Scènes de Faust. When the characterization of Faust was added for the concert opera, it was largely based upon a Romantic conception of his relationship to nature rather than a close reading of Goethe's text. For Les Troyens, however, one feels that Berlioz followed more closely the Virgilian text, letting it guide his total creation of libretto and musical score. Finally, in Béatrice et Bénédict Berlioz seemed to go to the other extreme of perhaps trying too hard to imitate a literary work in music. In the women's trio, discussed in chapter thirteen, Berlioz tried to portray the development of feelings over the course of the ensemble. Both libretto text and musical score suffer. The verses sung in order to convey this linear narrative do not present the necessary repetition; and the accompanying music also becomes drawn out and lacking in variety. As well, the concept of Romantic irony, featured by Berlioz in his "opéra-comique," stems from literature rather than from music. The repetition of the rehearsal scene prescribed by Berlioz in order to convey the Romantic irony was usually omitted by musical directors.

Can one conclude then, that the extent of Berlioz's literary involvement resulted in a strong integration of words and of musical sounds? The musico-literary analyses undertaken in this thesis seem to indicate that where he proceeded from a thorough knowledge and understanding of the

original literary text, this was the case. In La Damnation de Faust, Berlioz seems to have been caught at an early stage of the French appreciation of Goethe's drama. The text for the libretto was somewhat weak in characterization with the arias for Faust being attached in a less than fully integrated way and the dominating role of Méphistophélès lapsing into detached symbolism. In this gap, the chorus becomes the hero of the dramatic legend and the chief interest of the work definitely rests on the side of musical expression. Berlioz had been motivated by certain aspects of the Faust legend but he never aspired to giving a musical equivalent of Goethe's drama. Understood in this sense, the work holds brilliant and imaginative tableaux of various musical settings. The way in which Berlioz did not concern himself with linear plot development is even considered modern.

Again with Béatrice et Bénédict, Berlioz committed some injustice to the original work of Shakespeare. Character roles were minimized and material added on grounds of musical structure, i.e., symmetry. In the case of adding the duet, number eleven, Berlioz seems to have inclined towards too much linear plot development at the expense of musical development. The storyline has been further manipulated to permit Berlioz to reflect upon his own role as conductor and composer in the person of Somarone. This attempt at Romantic irony did not find acceptance with the audiences of Berlioz's day and has also been rejected in modern

productions.

Les Troyens was the one work considered here whose literary inspiration did not descend upon Berlioz as thunder or lightning. He was imbued from childhood with admiration for Virgil's text and for the classic Virgilian spirit. This deep-rooted appreciation led Berlioz to create a "grand opéra" that, first of all, was distinguished in terms of libretto verse--the equal of any of his day. In structuring the opera he enhanced its dimensions with his transfer of Shakespearian elements of form that best translated the Virgilian resonance of event and of character. The music to illustrate this libretto contributes to the dramatic development yet presents a grandeur and intimacy of its own. With his Les Troyens Berlioz achieved a true balance of dramatic and musical development and brought the nineteenth-century concept of French "grand opéra" to its pinnacle. All of the elements of classic French opera--ballet, spectacle, pantomime, ensemble and solos--are there, plus the exceptional powers of Berlioz's orchestration. It is a "Gesamtkunstwerk" combining the arts of music, literature, drama and dance, with few of the nine muses being disregarded.

All three works give evidence of outstanding dramatic music based upon an unusually thorough integration of libretto text and musical sounds. Berlioz was a very intense individual. Once inspired by a literary idea, he was consumed by strong, dramatic images that he strove to

express musically. With both words and music contributing in an unbroken line towards the dramatic development of a work, the result was a style of composition that was not easy to assimilate but lives on as truly remarkable for its power and depth.

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